Smithsonian B-1 (1922-1924)1948
NEH Bellacoola NEH

quantities of ducks and geese, and the inhabitants of the inland villages sometimes made hunting expeditions to the nesting places of wild-fowl in the lakes of the interior uplands. Although numbers of birds were sometimes killed in this way, they were never a steady article of diet. The same is true of grouse. Always plentiful, these birds were commonly killed, but never in large numbers.

The basis of the food supply was fish. The river teemed with salmon, which enabled the country to support its relatively large population. Spring, sockeye, hump-back, dog, and coho salmon, all entered the river in thousands during the spring and summer, while the steel-head could be caught throughout the year. They were taken in weirs and their flesh smoked for winter use. Throughout the year, salmon was the principal article of diet. Second in importance was the olachen, a fish somewhat resembling a herring, which entered the river in great numbers during April or May. They were taken in purse-like nets,* allowed to rot for ten days or two weeks, and then boiled. The grease was skimmed off and kept indefinitely to be used as a relish for other foods. It was always a sign of poverty if a person were obliged to eat berries without olachen grease. Trout and bull-heads were found in the river, but were not sufficiently plentiful to be of importance.

Although no form of agriculture was practised, the Bella Coola used vegetable food to a considerable extent. Berries were abundant; some were eaten raw, but many more were pounded into a pulpy mass and dried in the sun. Cakes prepared in this way kept indefinitely and formed one of the regular winter foods. The bark of the hemlock and cottonwood was eaten, as well as the roots of many plants. In recent years many of these have not been used, so that an investigator is apt to overlook their great importance in early times. Although useless for food, the cedar was the corner-stone of Bella Coola material culture. From its trunk were split out, with wedges, the wide planks which formed

*See Appendix A for a description of olachen fishing.

[illegible] B-1 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bella Coola MSS

772
sun attached to another land above the one of which our sky
is the underside. Boas (p. 28) has described this upper land [821]
in some detail. A number of Bella Coola were questioned on
this subject, but for some time no one could be found with 772
knowledge of its existence. At length one of the older people 184
remembered that a man who had died some thirty years ago
had a personal story connected with it, and later a Kimsquit
man was able to furnish definite information. He explained
that in his family there was a myth dealing with this matter; [424]
others might have heard this myth, but since it was not their
property, of course they would not be able to impart the facts
contained in it, nor would they necessarily believe it. Conse-
quently, an upper land, superimposed above that which is
immediately over the earth, cannot be described as a Bella
Coola belief; it is shared, so far as could be ascertained, by
only two families.

The chief feature of this uppermost world is its distance 772
and unapproachableness. To the supernatural beings living
in the intermediate land it is a *far-off* place; in fact, their
attitude towards it corresponds to that with which mortals
regard the land above their own. The supernatural ones can,
when they wish, visit this upper world, which is called *Nuqui-*
tâlz. A sun shines there, but it is a different kind of sun from [821]
that known to mortals. On the whole it appears that this
upper sky-land does not differ materially from either the earth
or the land immediately above. No human being has ever [773]
reached this distant land, so what little is known about it was
brought down in the beginning of time by the first people.

In addition to these two upper worlds, the Bella Coola
know of one, or perhaps two, below. One of these is inhabited [775]
by ghosts.[1] It somewhat resembles the earth, but is unsub-
stantial and ethereal. It is considered to be immediately

[1]At the present time the Bella Coola are in a state of transition between the old [178]
beliefs and the new. This concept is held only by the older people, so it might
be more accurate to describe it as one which they, the tribe as a whole, used to
know. It has been thought advisable to use the present tense throughout in
recording customs and beliefs which are now rapidly passing away.

McDermid E-9 (922-924)948
NEA Bella Coola NEA

from the moon and stated that there were mountains and snow on it. It is commonly stated that the marks on the moon represent a man carrying a bucket.

The stars figure but slightly either in Bella Coola mythology or thought; it is not even known who made them. Two in the Great Bear constellation are called respectively *Tpûkûs* and *Xoqmas*, "Little Girls." A lone star in the same part of the sky, named *Aʼâsa*, is said to be following the girls to the forest for illicit intercourse.

Moon, stars, and above all the sun, were, and still are to a certain extent, used by the Bella Coola in computing the passage of time. There are no individuals with the definite prerogative of keeping count of time, but formerly wise old men used to do so.[1] Differences of opinion were the rule rather than the exception, a condition which often led to bitter disputes concerning the proper date for starting the winter ceremonials. Boas (p. 41) has recorded the Bella Coola calendar in greater detail than the present writer has been able to do. The making of calendrical observations is a lost art, and the following list of the months was all that could be learned. It will be noted that these agree with Boas in regard to the months in the early part of the year, but not in those between the summer and winter solstices; no explanation is offered for this disparity.

First moon after the summer solstice: *Sîkîlamtsk*, which has the significance, "The Time for Sockeye Salmon to Ascend the River."

Second moon after the summer solstice: *Sîʼislalîl*, "The Time for Eating Dog Salmon."

Third moon after the summer solstice: *Sîʼismaiʼal*, "The Time for Eating Coboe Salmon."

Fourth moon after the summer solstice: *Sîqîlpum*, "The Time for Gathering Fern Root," or *Sîdakaas di Awaʼlîtwolsaix*,

[1] Kimsquit informant stated that there were professional calendrical experts in his home, when he was a young lad although members of the *hamat'sa* society (II, chap. i) sometimes attended to this matter.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

not systematized; if a man is asked about the powers or functions of a certain supernatural being, he will usually answer by recounting a story in which that being appears. What is known respecting many of the lesser supernatural beings depends upon information contained in stories, and as many of these are personal possessions, it follows that there is tremendous variation in individual knowledge. Psychologically, this is of little importance; there are enough supernatural beings for everyone to know some of them, and to expect to meet or hear them in the forests. To insert many of the stories contained in later chapters would break the sequence of description; all that is here attempted is to give a general summary, in a way foreign to Bella Coola thought.

Supernatural beings are by no means all-powerful. It is true that they have miraculous powers and can work weal or woe to human beings who chance to come in contact with them, but likewise they may sometimes be overwhelmed by mortals armed with objects steeped in human essence, such as a blanket which has been worn until it is impregnated not only with the smell, but the physical being of its owner. In particular, shamans or other mortals of great strength have been able to conquer the supernatural ones. Consequently, it may be said that although supernatural beings live on a plane different from that of mortals, they are not omnipotent. Long, long ago, man was able to come in contact with them more frequently, but that golden age when the semi-mythical ancestors of the Bella Coola were living has long since passed away, though it is only within the last few years that such beings, particularly supernatural animals, have become comparatively rare. The Bella Coola give three main reasons for this:

(1) Supernatural animals do not like the sound of muskets and have moved far away.

(2) With increasing dependence on the canning industry, fewer hunters penetrate into their haunts in the distant parts of the mountains.

(3) The younger Bella Coola no longer take pains to purify themselves as a means of placating supernatural beings.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

and eagles whom he invites to devour it. In so doing, he does not address them by their usual names, but calls Wolf, *Alhwi-gumum*, "The Devourer of Meat Which He Does Not Kill," that is, "The Biting Scavenger"; and Eagle, *Axaikmyutsmamum*, "The Constant Eater," that is, "The One Who Eats before He Is Hungry." Next morning the flesh has been devoured and the hunter believes his guests have eaten it. Animals and birds, being supernatural, can hear the words of mortals and read their thoughts. The significance of these actions is that animals have the power to conceal themselves, so a hunter must gain their favour before he can hope to succeed. Belief in the efficacy of such customs as these is rapidly falling into decay and bear meat is now often eaten, but the skull is carefully placed in an evergreen tree near where the animal is slain, so that it may come back to life.

Fish, likewise, are immortal. In autumn the streams are choked with dead and dying salmon, but the Bella Coola know that they are not really dead, they have merely shed their worthless blankets in accordance with *Alquntäm*'s decrees. At that season of the year he causes the rivers to rise so that they will sweep away these useless and outworn cloaks.

Although the salmon, from the kindness of their hearts, allow human beings to feast on their blankets, yet they have certain likes and dislikes which are carefully observed. From the time the first spring salmon appear (I, pp. 759-761) until the rising of the July moon, women are not allowed to eat them or to go near the river. Men may eat the flesh, but instead of throwing the bones to dogs, they carefully return them to the river saying:

"Please come back tomorrow."

If this is inconvenient, bones can be thrown into the woods with impunity.

Salmon, like men and animals, live a human-like existence in their homes far beneath the surface of the ocean. They lack and desire earthly objects, especially pounded cedar-bark (see Appendix A) to use as sponges for their children, so the Bella Coola throw pieces of it and eagle down on the water.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NES Bellacoola NES

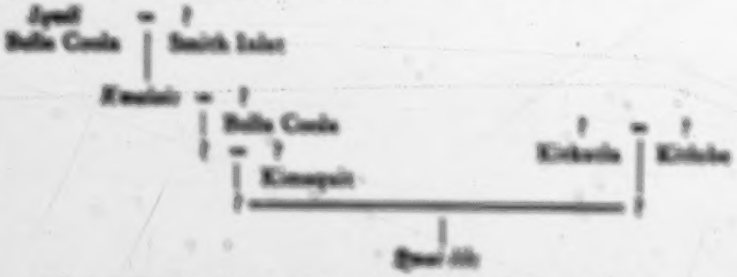
becomes critical. Only a shaman (I, p. 339) can return one, and if he fails death always results. In some cases a spirit leaves its owner without apparent reason; he becomes insane, tries to eat dirt, and his relatives realize at once what is the matter. They summon a shaman who takes off his cape, hangs it like a pouch on his stick, and points it in all directions as he sings his shaman's song. Finally he locates what is missing, and traps it in his cloak, which he places around the sick man. This restores the element and the sufferer recovers immediately. Another method is for the shaman to press the back of the patient's neck, and by blowing and spitting cause the wandering spirit to return. Either cure must be performed by a shaman because of the supernatural power required.

Spirits can be extracted in various ways. Shamans can draw one forth by sucking at the back of the neck between their cupped hands; in former times, some were so powerful that they could extract them by their mere presence. During *kwiat* dances (II, chap. i), the uninitiated are told that if they enter the house where a ceremony is taking place, or even pass on the sidewalk outside the door, their spirits will be drawn from them by the power within and attracted to the dancer or to the sacred platform on which he is concealed. Many stories are told of this, which were firmly believed by the uninitiated until the last few years. Members of the society claim that their great power acts as a magnet to the spirits of all but their associates, except children in arms; the latter can be taken by their mothers into the house, because their supernatural elements have not developed sufficient strength to leave their bodies. A person may also lose his spirit through a sudden shock. If two people meet unexpectedly in the forest and one of them shouts loudly at the other, even if only in fun, the spasmodic contraction of the muscles is enough to expel it. The person to whom this happens falls down as if dead, and though he soon recovers, his spirit has left him, and if it is not brought back by a shaman he dies a lingering death.

At death, the spirit permanently leaves the body. In some

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

forest units with which he is connected, but the following is an instance of survival for several generations. *Ḵ!wai-lib* is an orphan about ten years of age, now living in Bella Coola; he is looked upon with considerable respect as being a member of ancestral families in Bella Coola, Kimsquit, Smith Inlet, Kitkatla, and Kitlobe. His pedigree, given below, explains his powers. The symbol = marks a marriage, and the male is shown on the left in each case.



Theoretically, *Ḵ!wai-lib* is as much a native of Smith Inlet as he is of Bella Coola where his father made his home. If he should visit Smith Inlet and make known his pedigree, he would be received by the members of the ancestral family of his great-great-grandmother.[1] His welcome would be more assured if he were the owner of a name from their origin myth. Difficulties of communication and frequent wars made it virtually impossible in the old days to keep in touch with relatives in distant tribes, except in the case of a mighty chief who was able to invite visitors from great distances to feasts. Thus names taken by women to foreign husbands were virtually lost to the members of her ancestral family. In the course of a few generations, such designations carried afield would be revived as if dormant by some member of the family, and all recollection of the foreign marriage forgotten.

[1] The Bella Coola are now living in a single village, it was impossible to obtain a definite statement of the ownership by one individual of rights in a number of localities within the tribal area. It appears certain, however, that the sentiments expressed with regard to *Ḵ!wai-lib* as Smith Inlet are identical with those formerly held by generations in ancestral families located in different Bella Coola villages.

-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

of this process of loss is the assimilation to names originally brought into the ancestral nan from abroad. Unless intercourse and were maintained by "return marriages," in no tradition would be remembered to account this, if used at all, would be interwoven into ncestral myth. Hence a myth is not static names embodied in it. These change from eration; it is probable that elements of the like additions and alterations, even though consider this to be the case.

la regard the ancestral family as a social unit, of the present, but as stretching back to the f the earth. Viewed from this angle, it is in admitted to be so by the Bella Coola, a uni- with patrilineal descent, which may, in both nd most ancient generations, be marked by t instead. A man frequently uses preroga- rough his mother, her mother, or even her , but it is tacitly assumed that for many ons such rights passed in the patrilineal line. uccession extended back to the beginning of ses, prerogatives were transmitted matriline- able period after the settlement of the earth, becoming patrilineal.

hus far assumed that the only prerogative ancestral name is a knowledge of the myth bodied. But there are others. For example, st inhabitants of the world are said to have es, each of which was displayed by its owner when he took for himself a name. Thence- erson entitled to use that particular totem- he person with the legal right to the name in ame principle governs all dance names; each to perform a certain ceremonial. Thus it is e the previous definition by saying that:

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

names are also willed, but since their value depends on the goods expended to validate them, there is seldom bitterness about their allotment. Indeed, a chief who is the legal owner of a designation which came from above in the beginning of time, will in many cases choose to elevate his position with respect to a title of comparatively recent date. But if any person who is not a member of the ancestral family should dare to use an ancestral name, all the members rise to avenge the theft, for such they feel it to be. In recent years, however, this practice has become comparatively common. In such cases a man, eager to share in the glories of a myth and able to give a potlatch, has validated an ancestral name to which he has no right. The presence of the white man alone restrains the injured ancestral family. Names are sometimes lent or hired to those who are not members of the group for definite sums; the recipient recompenses the individual. If such names are not returned for several generations quarrels are apt to arise since the recipient claims to be the real owner and not the temporary possessor. During his tenancy of the name he is entitled to any prerogative attached to it, but he is not considered a *bona fide* member of the ancestral family.

Instances have occurred in which an old man or woman, believing himself to be the last survivor of an ancestral family, has donated his names and myth to those who have befriended him, or these have been taken by those who buried him. Some individuals are constantly watching to conduct the funerals of friendless old people in the hope of so obtaining names. But in almost every case this leads to friction, since it is virtually impossible for an ancestral family to die out. Perhaps in the next generation, perhaps in the following one, some youth will claim descent from the first ancestors of the supposedly defunct family, and claim the myth and names embodied therein. This leads to a feud with the person, or his descendants, who has received the names through aid given to the "last" of the family.

Such instances of an ancestral family becoming practically

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

lies in public opinion which expresses contempt for a lazy man who is constantly begging.

To anyone familiar with the definite social groupings of a tribe divided into clans or land-owning families, the ancestral family of the Bella Coola must appear as a vague and unreal unit, only distinguished by its intangibility. So it was found when investigating in the field. When information began to accumulate, it seemed as if there must be some definite obligations incumbent upon all members of the ancestral family, but none could be found. Without asking a direct question, the point was raised whether, if a man were killed, the members of his ancestral family would unite to avenge him. Conversely, were they liable for the deeds of any member? In each case the reply was in the negative; these matters concern only the immediate family. In regulating marriage the ancestral family is important, since it is wise for a man or woman to seek his mate within the members of that group, though it is not compulsory. Theoretically, the terms of kinship applied to members of the immediate family may be extended to members of the ancestral family, but in practice this is rarely the case, and, if so, is functionless. It might be argued that this somewhat wide application of kinship terms, verging on the classificatory usage, is a relic of an earlier, and now broken-down, clan system. It is impossible to prove or to deny such a contention. When trying to discover whether the members of an ancestral family ever contributed to a potlatch whereby one of their fellows established himself as a chief, the following interesting comment was received. The previous winter the informant had been in Bella Bella, and there the point was raised by a Bella Bella chief whom he quoted as follows:

"We laugh at you Bella Coola because each of you is always trying to be chief. Our system is much better; we all help our chiefs."

The man agreed with the Bella Bella man that there was an important difference between the practices of the two tribes.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

594 869 be made more powerful by magical means or the ritual acts of relatives. Although these often entail great labour and expense, parents seldom neglect their duty; in fact, care for their children is one of the strongest Bella Coola characteristics, though the methods used are so foreign to the white man that he has difficulty in realizing their meaning. The hope of both [847] parents is to have children to carry on their names; infanticide is unknown and the death of an infant is mourned almost as [586] much as that of an adult. Sterility and impotency are frequent causes for divorce.

163 [165] At the present time there is a high birth-rate in Bella Coola, although the heavy infant mortality prevents any appreciable increase in the population. In the old days, it is said, there were always large families, though much confidence cannot be placed in this statement. In families where there are 593 several children, the first-born, whether boy or girl, assumes an important position. His or her influence, as eldest, is naturally considerable, and the parents foster this through the vague feeling that it is proper for the eldest to be the most important in the family. In adult years, and after marriage, the influence of the eldest of a family continues to have considerable weight with younger brothers and sisters.

592 556 [595] [602] If a man is poor he cannot hope to have more than one wife, and his family circle will be limited to their children, and perhaps to elderly parents. On the other hand, a wealthy and powerful man usually has a larger family. Not only may he have several wives, but his aged relatives, and those of his wife, look to him for support and assistance. Such are usually welcome to live in his house; they lend what aid they can in collecting food, and it gratifies a man's pride and sense of power to be closely surrounded by a large family. The Bella [888] Coola are, on the whole, considerate to their aged relatives.[1]

[178] [1] This is not true of the present. During the winter of 1923-4 a feeble old man, living alone, was often in actual want of food. Disliked and degraded, of a mean disposition himself, none of his surviving relatives, of whom the nearest were nephews, would take him into their houses. Commenting on this man's fate, several informants pointed out how, in the old days, such a one could have found

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

The married sons of a chief usually live in his house, and if he is very powerful the husbands of his daughters may also reside with him. Such a man is at the zenith of power, surrounded by a close group, formed of elderly relatives, of children and grandchildren. Connections by marriage are also added to the family group. At the present time, for example, one Bella Coola man is looking after his brother's widow, and it is felt that she is a member of his family.

Another way in which a rich man can increase the size of his family is by adoption. Parents who have lost an infant may adopt the child of some member of the ancestral family of either father or mother. The matter is usually arranged soon after birth, and the transfer takes place immediately after weaning. The real parents are willing since they know that the adopting parents will be able to validate valuable prerogatives and names for the child, which they themselves are unable to do. This desire for their child's welfare overrules parental love. In such cases the real father or mother can likewise bestow names and other prerogatives on the child, who really becomes a member of two families. This is often done by an old couple whose own children have married and moved away, and who thus find themselves lonely. It is considered disgraceful for parents to allow their children to be adopted by anyone not a member of their ancestral family, since that would be an admission of inability to bring up a child in the path of his ancestors.

"Your father was not strong," could be said to such a child as a reproach.

In the case of an orphan some wealthy relative is almost always ready to adopt him. Consequently, as he grows up, he receives his full share of the ancestral origin myth, and the names embodied therein, so that the loss of his own parents is of little consequence in the course of life. Occasionally a child is not adopted by relatives, and then his fate is indeed hard.

shelter in the house of any chief, and shared in the food which was being distributed at the almost continuous ceremonial feasts. Now, each family lives alone and no one feels any responsibility for this old man.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

TERM	DIRECT ADDRESS	INDIRECT ADDRESS
601 Brother or sister of a grandparent	Addressed as the grandparent, especially when living in the same family. The terms are further widely applied to elderly members of the same ancestral family.	*waxwaxtsis* Seldom used term; more commonly spoken of by name, or as grandparents.
Great grandparents	As grandparents.	As grandparents.
Elderly male relatives spoken of collectively		*mămămnukĭsats*
Elderly female relatives spoken of collectively		*sĭtnĭănamĭs* These two terms are used with respect to a man's "power" through the possession of many elderly relatives.
Eldest brother or sister	By name, or *ɣualum*.	*ɣualum*
Second eldest brother or sister	By name.	*ăs-ikw-tl*, or *ălĭkt ol di ɣualum*
Third eldest brother or sister	" "	*ălĭkt*
Fourth eldest brother or sister	" "	*ɣwaxwam*
Youngest brother or sister	" " or *saɣinas*.	*saɣi*

[178]

At the present time the intermediate terms are rarely, if ever, used. *Ɣualum* and *saɣi* are continually employed, the former for a brother or sister older than the speaker, the latter for a brother or sister younger than the speaker. When necessary sex is usually indicated by giving the person's name, or by the use of sex-denoting particles.

Only brother with several sisters		*smĭlkpănts*
Only sister with several brothers		*ăsywĭlănts*
Stepbrother or sister, same father, different mother	By name, or *ɣualum*, or *saɣinas*, according to relative age.	*nunmaol di mănas*
Stepbrother or sister, same mother, different father	By name, or *ɣualum*, or *saɣinas*, according to relative age.	*nunmaol ĭci sĭtnas*

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

differentiate between cross- and ortho-cousins, and the unsystematic groupings of nephews and nieces show "family," as opposed to classificatory, principles. Finally, rhetorical terms for the ancestral family, for many ancestors, and many descendants, correspond to the importance of a large number of relatives in Bella Coola thought.

In many parts of the world the classificatory system of relationship occurs where the community is divided into clans. The occurrence of some of these features among the Bella Coola raises the question of whether or not they should be regarded as survivals from an earlier clan form of social organization. The Bella Coola may once have had clans, but their relationship system does not furnish any real evidence to this effect. The reciprocal terms really have the significance, "Relation by marriage of the same generation," or "of a generation once removed," a form of address which does not require explanation in any ancient form of social organization. Moreover, the importance of the eldest child, as potential transmitter of the glories of the ancestral family, is sufficient reason for differentiating brothers and sisters in terms of their relative ages. This feature suggests that in former times this was more important than it has been in the recent past. It is not implied that the Bella Coola never had a clan system, as such may have been the case many generations ago, but their kinship terminology can be explained without that hypothesis. The somewhat wide application to cousins of terms which are properly limited to brothers and sisters may easily have been derived from a process of copying. The Bella Coola are well acquainted with the clan system of the northern coastal tribes, so that it is by no means impossible, or unlikely, that they should have adopted the principle of applying the same kinship term to many individuals, and hence to members of their own ancestral families. Finally, the somewhat vague and unsystematic application of terms to relatives according to whether or not they are members of the immediate family, is a feature not at all surprising in view of the essential fluidity of Bella

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

lieved that all the Kitkatla chiefs were powerful, but *Tedzia* was the greatest of all. It is said that one of his prerogatives[1] was to exercise *jus primae noctis* whenever a Kitkatla was married. Without question, tales of this chief's prowess have become exaggerated in transmission, none the less they show that the Bella Coola realize the great importance of the northern chiefs. Concerning their nearer neighbours, the Bella Bella, the Bella Coola understand the way in which the members of a family combine to help their chief in the giving of presents. They say that the Bella Bella consider the Bella Coola practice of each one endeavouring to make himself a chief to be foolish in the extreme. Such is also said to be the opinion among the Kwakiutl, who support their contention that in Bella Coola all are chiefs, from the fact that flooring exists under the seats of all, whereas in Fort Rupert, their home, such occurs only beneath the seats of chiefs.

Corresponding to the extreme paucity of functions possessed by Bella Coola chiefs, their prerogatives are likewise scanty. Indeed, they take their validated seats only during certain rites of the secret society connected with chiefs, at potlatches, and at ceremonial meals. These last occur whenever a deer or seal is killed; the latter is considered a great delicacy.[2] Anyone can kill a seal, but it would be unthinkable for a Bella Coola to share its flesh with his immediate family only. The animal is cleaned, the hole made by bullet or spear carefully plugged, and the carcass boiled whole in a large box. Meanwhile a herald (I, p. 244) summons the chiefs to the house where the successful hunter lives. If the meal is to consist merely of one small seal, only a few chiefs are invited, those of greatest influence through their possession of "strong" seats. When several seals have been killed, the number invited is correspondingly larger, but no woman may partake unless she ranks

[1] This is said to have been a personal prerogative, not shared by all chiefs, and requiring validation by valuable presents.

[2] Only traces of the rite described in this paragraph occur at the present time. In fact, the reservation of seal meat for chiefs alone was discontinued towards the close of the last century.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

622 623 1778 [575] there is such dread of the supernatural powers possessed by members of the *kusiut* society that none would dare go there. If an uninitiated person should do so, he would formerly have been either killed or initiated into the society. The meeting-place of the *Lomqo-ts* chiefs is on a ledge of rock jutting out over a waterfall about a quarter of a mile from the village. The stream winds down a narrow cleft of the mountain side, screened by dense vegetation, and suddenly falls into a cauldron, so hemmed in by cliffs that no sunlight can enter. The ledge is immediately above the brink of the falls, one of the most awe-inspiring places imaginable. The meeting-places of other villages lack such natural settings, though all are at the bases of cliffs, or near some easily distinguished feature. Some of them are decorated with rude carvings, pecked into the stone. The meaning of the designs is not known to any of the present inhabitants. Some of them were made, long ago, by chiefs when they were composing tunes; they picked out the rock in time to the music forming in their minds. Others were mere memorials of certain events. If a chief gave an important ceremony, he, or one of his friends, carved a figure, perhaps that of a man, perhaps of some animal connected with the rite, to recall the occasion. No carvings have been made within the life-time of any Bella Coola, so it is probable that they had further significance, now unknown.

● 178 532 778 [211]

622 623 201 When a chief wishes to summon his fellows for a meeting he visits each and notifies him by a simple pressure of the foot, in many cases unobserved even by those sitting near. The person so called slips away, unostentatiously, to the meeting-place.

578 622 682 [159] The position of chief was not without disadvantages in the old days. The Bella Coola are so jealous that anyone who succeeded in elevating himself to a position above his fellows became an object of envy. Their mythology contains many examples of the murder of some powerful chief by rivals of his own village, and informants of today state that these records are true. One intelligent man asserted that his father had

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

to a complicated figure such as a whale, and in that case an expert dancer among the guests is called upon to perform. It is announced that this is, "to make clean the road for the dead."

After each masked figure has disappeared, the sound of whistling from without grows gradually weaker, as the apparition returns whence it came. In solemn silence X takes a copper[1] which he has had in readiness, breaks it across his knee,[2] and throws it either into the fire or down on the ground in the track that the figure has taken. Then the announcer calls out loudly:

"It is for his crest.[3] It has 'made bone for the dead.'" Then he continues, speaking for X and using the first person:

"My heart is glad at seeing my father.[4] At death he returned back on the path of my family's ancestors and donned our ancient crest. He now lives in *Nuxmăt-a*, whence he came to visit us and whither he has now gone back."

The significance of the throwing down of a copper is entirely unknown to the modern Bella Coola, although they still perform the ritual. In some vague way it is felt that "bone," which may imply *stability*, has been provided for the deceased. The act thus appears in the light of an offering to the dead, but this sentiment is not clearly appreciated by the participants in the rite; the present has been made *for*, rather than *to*, the one being mourned.

The copper, now valueless, is picked up by any chief and given to a poor man.

After a short interval a number of youths begin to distribute presents, provided by X, which have been placed in readiness. Gifts of equal value are given to all foreign male guests; while the women receive ones less valuable. These presents

[1] One of the plaques of native copper, such as were formerly beaten out cold and used as tokens of value by the coast tribes of British Columbia. Their employment by the Bella Coola will be described later in greater detail (I, p. 252).

[2] The breaking is sometimes omitted.

[3] That is: "For the dead man, now in form of his crest."

[4] Or whatever relative the deceased may have been.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

his relatives. This punishment is customary in cases of the upsetting of a canoe. Death is the penalty for throwing refuse into the river, particularly during the summer, and until the coming of the white man the River Guardian exacted it without hesitation.

THE PROFESSION OF UTTERING A DRONING CRY

At the appearance of masked figures representing supernatural beings, whether in *tsaaé* or *kusiut* dances, many of the women repeatedly utter a peculiar, high-pitched, droning cry which adds considerably to the weirdness and impressiveness of the occasion. Ability to do this depends on an ancestral prerogative duly confirmed by the distribution of presents. Many ancestral myths describe how some of the first women were given by *Alquntám*, or acquired in other ways, the right to drone, and mention is made of the name used by each with respect to this prerogative. Unlike the one previously described, many of the first women possessed this privilege, which is accordingly common at the present time. A name of this type is usually confirmed in girlhood, sometimes even in infancy, and being of relatively slight importance may be validated at a ceremony of less dignity than a potlatch. One of these names is *Nuuxqueltslaiqua-a*, which has reference to the blue-green sheen of some abalone-shell brought from the east by Raven in the beginning of time, as described in the ancestral myth in which this name is included. For many years there has been considerable laxity with regard to this prerogative, and women lacking it have even been urged to drone in order to add to the solemnity of the occasion and to increase the wonder of the uninitiated.

There is another similar prerogative, enabling the incumbent to drone at mourning ceremonies. In the beginning of time, *Smeaua* of Kimsquit married *Tlátwaitl*, the daughter of a Bella Bella chief, who had this right. It has since been transmitted from one of her descendants to another at Kimsquit.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

between the two societies. Presently the elderly *a'alk* returns, clad in his ceremonial costume consisting of the head-gear, a blanket, and a narrow apron from which hang deer hooves, small pieces of copper, or other jingling articles. The singers strike up his song, and he dances near the fire in a manner depending upon which of the four dances he has the right to perform. Again the *siki* leaves the house; when he returns he announces that a *tutwinam* is coming with a song for the youth, naming the one who is to be made an *a'alk*. A moment passes, and in stalks a masked figure depicting the form taken by the first ancestor of the novice, or the being from which one of his later forefathers received an *a'alk* prerogative. Sometimes two of these beings appear. The apparition circles the fire, stops beside the singers, and chants a song to them in a low voice. Then it enters the back-room and is seen no more. Presently the singers strike up the song they have just heard. To those who are neither *a'alk* nor *ɬɬaok* it seems that the song was brought by the supernatural visitor; in reality, it is the one previously composed by the singers and taught by them to the wearer of the mask to lend realism to the performance. The youth concealed within the back-room does not emerge on this occasion, the song is merely sung in practice. Sometimes the masked figure appears during the daytime and walks openly along the shore of the river like a foreign guest, as indeed it is said to be.

The coming of a *tutwinam* is one of the points of resemblance between *a'alk* and *ɬɬaok* rites. The older people agree that this has long been a feature of the former society, adopted by the latter in recent years. The description given in this section appears to be of the original and proper use, although, as already noted, the *ɬɬaok* have recently employed *tutwinam* for somewhat different purposes.

It is uncertain whether or not the *a'alk* novice remains secluded any longer within the back-room. In ancient times he probably did, but with the recent growth of the *ɬɬaok*

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

society and decline of the *a'alk*, concealment has become limited to initiates of the former organization.

No more *a'alk* dances take place during the potlatch preliminaries, but with the coming of the first group of foreign guests, the host displays as many types of dance as he is entitled to, including *a'alk* if he has the necessary prerogative. On this occasion other *a'alk*, especially relatives of the donor, give their dances, the only time that such are used at potlatches except by novices receiving names. This is repeated on the arrival of every party of guests.

Meanwhile the novice, or novices, has been practising the proper steps for his appearance, which always occurs immediately before the entry of the masked figure representing the donor's dead relative. As already mentioned, there are four kinds of *a'alk* dances, known as *nusqwal*,[1] *Haiyākam*, *qi'aqa*, and *am'lel·a*. A similar song is used for a dancer of any one of these four; the text describes some small incident of the ancestral myth in which the name occurs, such as the bringing down of the prerogative by the first incumbent in the beginning of time. At the proper moment, the singers beat this out and the audience joins them in singing it. Then the singers begin to strike rapidly on the floor with double beats, assisted by the guests who clap their hands in rapid couplets. Out comes the dancer, resplendent in his head-dress decorated with weasel skins, and women with the required prerogative begin to drone. If his prerogative is as a *Haiyākam* or *qi'aqa*, he proceeds to a place beside the fire and begins to run around it, sunwise, in short mincing steps, revolving at the same time on himself. He clasps his hands behind his back and bends down, then stands upright with palms extended upwards, never ceasing to move his feet in rapid steps. This type of dance is far more violent than a *nusɔk* one, and the amount of energy expended by a dancer in his rapid circuits of the fire is tremendous. Never, even for a moment, are his feet quiet, while his body twists and bends in an amazing fashion. After two

[1] Among the supernatural beings, the *nusqwal* is a yearling mountain goat.

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

575
574 presents to the singers and heralds who have rendered assist-
535 ance. Instead of dispersing immediately, the guests may remain to gamble or wrestle. Since there is no solemnity attached to
[533] the affair, it is a time for indulgence in amusements of all kinds.
[525] These conclude the chief features of the *a'alk* dances. Prob-
[526] ably they once played an important part in the lives of the Bella Coola, but with the increase in importance of the *ɬɬaaok*,
[178] they have decayed into little more than a form of entertainment.

A'alk origin myths

551 Theoretically, every Bella Coola *a'alk* should be able to
575 record the myth in which his name is embodied, but few can
793 do so. Of course if a man has been able to validate both ancestral and *a'alk* names from the same myth, that is his authorization for both. In many cases a myth is split, and the portion containing an *a'alk* appellation is given to some member of the ancestral family, other than the chief able to validate the most important ancestral name. In such a case, the *a'alk* can record little more than that his designation came down with a specified group of the first people. This, for example, is the explanation given by a Kimsquit *nusqual* for his name *Sinxālotla* which came to earth with *Smaoan* (I, p. 332) in the beginning of time. Another Kimsquit *a'alk*, *Tlaiyākum*, whose prerogative is to perform the dance of that name, states that it was brought down by *Sinuyil* (I, p. 326), who assumed the designation of *Tlaiyākum* after its performance. This early settler had the additional name of *W'tsilas*.

539 The two following origin myths were obtained in some detail:

Once,[1] long, long ago, *Ilquntlm* came to the conclusion that it was not good for the inhabitants of the world to be afraid of supernatural beings. He decided that the best way to dispel this dread would be to arrange a marriage between his daughter, *Smoo-o*, and a mortal; so he

[115] [1] Related by Mrs. Willie Mack. European elements have obviously been
[177] incorporated into the first part of this legend, though the narrator considered the whole tale to be ancient.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

patrons and claiming to possess supernatural powers. In contrast to the *a'alk*, the *kusiut* are well organized and regulated; its members are proud of their powers, and scornful of those who lack the same. Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand jealousy between the two. Until relatively recent times, the *a'alk* were numerically stronger, and included some chiefs, whereas the strength of the *kusiut* society depended on the supernatural strength claimed by its members. It is true that individuals occasionally belonged to both, if they happened to possess prgrogatives of both kinds, but, as a rule, the *a'alk* were young men and the *kusiut* were older people. This rivalry was formerly so intense that all who were not members of the latter society were often termed *a'alk* irrespective of whether or not they actually possessed dances of that type; Carrier Indians alone were not so designated. During the summer, members of the two societies dwelt amicably together, but during the winter, when dances took place, there were continual bickerings. The *kusiut* constantly endeavoured to impress their rivals with their own prowess; while the *a'alk*, not convinced of the others' power, used to mock them in their songs. This was the usual practice in case of some error in *kusiut* ritual. The *a'alk* frequently disobeyed the orders of the *kusiut* and a number of them once tried to pry up a huge boulder beneath which was the "power" of a certain *kusiut* (II, p. 8). In recent years the *kusiut* society has entirely gained the supremacy, but it is agreed by all Bella Coola that in former years this was by no means the case, and that *a'alk* did not hesitate even to kill one of their rivals.

Miscellaneous Ceremonies

The rites described in this chapter and the one preceding comprise the potlatch of the Bella Coola so far as its details could be learnt. Until the increase of wealth in recent years, the potlatch was rare, and it is unlikely that in any village more than one month in the year was consumed in the

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

provided with means of sustenance, a house, and certain supernatural powers. The right to the names of these people, as well as to the type of ceremonial objects used by them, has been the privilege of their descendants. But these early Bella Coola, like their modern descendants, had several designations, each carrying with it a definite prerogative. In a single myth there may be embodied a dozen or more names and incidents which are quoted at the present day to authorize such different phases of culture as dances, rights to hunting-grounds, professions, names of dogs, or *kusiut* prerogatives.[1] Any myth which gives the initial use of a name, a dance, or any other prerogative, is termed a *smaiusta*. Each of these is, or was in the old days, remembered with great care and never recounted in full detail except to the members of the ancestral family whose names are embodied in it. Even at potlatches the full details of the myth are not laid bare. Indeed, if a young man is of a flighty, garrulous disposition, unlikely to preserve the dignity of his ancestral fame, the details are concealed from him. Even at the present time there is much resentment at any unauthorized use of a *smaiusta*, and in the old days this would inevitably have led to bloodshed.

Boas (p. 116) states that the terms *smaiusta* and *sumsma* are synonymous. The writer feels certain that this is an error. It was discussed repeatedly with various Bella Coola, all of whom agreed that a *sumsma* is a mere story which can be told by anyone, whereas a *smaiusta* is a myth possessed by the individual, or individuals, whose prerogatives are derived from it. To the Bella Coola the two are utterly different.

None the less, there is no doubt that records of the past change from one category to the other. A wealthy chief, eager to give a potlatch, but lacking the mythical authorization, must frequently have used a *sumsma*, claiming the hero as an ancestor. There would be veiled amusement at him for doing so, but the prestige of one who can give potlatches is so great that in time his claim would probably be accepted. The two

[1] The details of these will be described later.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

178 versions of the myth given (vol. I, pp. 313-19) is a case in point. The first was told as a *smaiusta* by a woman who claimed to 773 be a descendant of the people figuring in it; the second, as a story, *sumsma*, by a man. In view of the reliability of both informants, it seems highly probable that this is a story, partly converted to a myth. In other examples there are incidents resembling the supernatural tales given in vol. I, chap. IX, and here too it appears probable that *sumsma* have been assimilated into *smaiusta*. It is complimentary to the truthfulness [577] of the Bella Coola, and to the respect they show for intangible [424] property, that none of the myths recorded were *smaiusta* owned by others. Repeatedly an informant would say that he knew one, but would not tell it since it belonged to some other family.

128 After collecting a few myths, in each of which it was stated 773 that the first settlers at village X were A, B, and C, with their sisters, P and Q, it seemed as if it would have been possible, before the culture of the Bella Coola had fallen into its present decay, to make a census of those whom they believe to have been first settlers of this earth, and that such a list would have had few contradictions. This was soon found to be false. Two myths may give different people as the first occupants of a certain village, nor does such contradiction trouble the Bella Coola. Each man, convinced of the authenticity of his own family account, is quite willing to believe that the one belonging [811] to someone else is equally correct. This characteristic lack of logical consistency has already been mentioned in other connections. Boas (p. 61) likewise gives an instance of uncertainty as to the first occupants of a village, though, on the whole, he found Bella Coola mythology to be more codified than the present writer has done. In view of their lack of systematization in other matters, it would have been surprising if they had evolved a census of their first ancestors, accepted by all as accurate.

[178] Another matter to be considered at this point is the similarity of detail in many myths. In part this can be explained

I:M:Haeberlin E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

by the assumption that *smsms* have been elevated into *smaiuta;* in this case it would not be impossible for the same story to have been used by two or more families. A more common explanation is the splitting of myths. Although, theoretically, one can never be altered, and portions in the possession of other individuals are remembered as such, there must have been many cases in which the owner of a section told the whole as his own property. This would not be difficult in cases where he moved away from the other members of his family. In course of time, with the assimilation of elements in themselves not strictly mythological, two myths would evolve having a few incidents in common. If asked concerning this, the Bella Coola explain that the first people were quite as capable of doing the same things as two modern men. The occurrence of the same name, or names, in different myths does not, according to them, prove a connection, since many of the first people had the same names.

Finally, there have been included a number of myths dealing with the coming to earth of people in other localities. Probably these are, in origin, those of other tribes, more or less assimilated to the Bella Coola pattern. Each was said to have been obtained by the marriage of one of the descendants of the people described therein with a Bella Coola.

No further explanation is needed for the following myths which are arranged, as far as possible, according to the list already given of Bella Coola towns.

Bella Coola Origin Myths

origin myth of *Ilpálas*[1]

In the beginning of time, *Áqunstm*, in his form of *Sun*, the Sun, sent down a man, *Yaxalt'mai*, to Mount *Nuxmálais* (also called *Áqunstmaklut, Spatsds*, and *Ilálkumlikut*), a mountain on the north side of the Bella Coola River about two miles from the sea, near the upper end of the Indian reserve. With him came *Xwuxwuxwa*, the Hummingbird,

[1] Related by Mrs. Walkem.

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plied to provide abundant food for all; it became the ancestor of all the beaver of the upper valley. Owing to their position higher up the Bella Coola, *Tsiałwaic* and his brothers considered that they were nearer to the sun than any of the people dwelling below, a fact of which they were exceedingly proud. Moreover, having been sent down by him, the sun was their crest.

There were two large boulders in the river near the settlement, which *Aiquentlm* had shown *Tsiałwaic* how to use as supports for a salmon-weir. With the help of his brothers, a hole was drilled in one of the rocks; then they felled a large tree upstream and allowed it to drift down until the butt lodged in the perforated boulder and the head swung across against the other. With this as base, other trunks were woven in upright so that the river was almost spanned and a fine dam constructed. In this they caught so many salmon that *Tsiałwaic* and his brothers were able to call people from far and near to potlatches and feast them liberally on the fish. In course of time their sister was married to a chief from another town. Henceforth, whenever one of her brothers gave a potlatch, he was able to rebuy his sister on a lavish scale with the teeming salmon. The sun had taught the women a song for such occasions, which has since been used as a prerogative by her descendants when rebuying themselves from their husbands.

Tsiałwaic made a long voyage of exploration during which he reached the Skeena River. He made friends with the inhabitants of the town, *Kyemon*, who gave him the name, *Xwulkun*,[1] meaning whale in their language. Continuing his journey, he ultimately circled the earth before returning home. He obtained several other designations, including *Ailxmka* from the Kwakiutl people.[2]

Years after the settlement of *Snaik-ai*, the drilled stone supporting the salmon-weir broke and the ruins were swept away downstream. The people cut their hair and blackened their faces in mourning, then moved to *Stuie* where a number of their daughters had married chiefs.

ORIGIN MYTH OF *Nałaxag*[3]

It is common to add details from a story to a family myth in order to increase its length and importance. Almost cer-

[1] It appears that *Xwulkun* is an attempt to pronounce the English, whale-bone, an interesting example of the way in which modern words have been incorporated into ancient myths and been clothed with the glamour of antiquity.

[2] Such are still used by members of the ancestral family descended from *Tsiałwaic*.

[3] Related by Mrs. Webber, who had learnt it from her late father, *Xnaxhaic*, a chief of *Snaid*, whose hamlet name was *Snaiłaxg*.

Lillooet E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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tainly this has been done with the following, in spite of the fact that Boas (p. 53) records it in greater detail than the writer was able to obtain. A second version was obtained from a reliable informant who recounted it as a mere tale without hesitation. He may have been ignorant that it was the myth of another family, or may have disregarded that point, though this is unlikely. The content itself strongly supports the view that details of the usual "story" type have been added.

In the beginning of time there came down to the river which enters North Bentinck Arm at Green Bay a man, *Nuxsey*, and his wife, *Sumxiustakw*. They went down the river to Green Bay, since called *Nuxsey* from the man, where they built their house and settled. In time a son was born, to whom they gave the name *Slokle*. The child grew with phenomenal rapidity until before long he had acquired the strength and intelligence of a man. One day *Slokle* went for a walk up the river, carrying his bow and arrows. He met what he thought was a man, though it was really a black bear in human form. The supernatural one invited *Slokle* to go home with him, which the youth did. As soon as he entered the abode he realized that he was in a bear's house, but he did not disclose to his host that he had this knowledge. The bear brought to his guest some skunk cabbage, saying that it was dry salmon; to bears skunk cabbage is dry salmon. The food was broken in small fragments and served on a very small dish so that *Slokle* was afraid that there would not be enough, though Black Bear assured him that he would not be able to eat it all. So it proved. *Slokle* ate and ate until he could eat no more, without diminishing the amount of food on the dish.

Then Black Bear said, "You must spend the night here; tomorrow you can return."

So *Slokle* slept that night in Bear's house.

Next day—it was really next year, because one night in the land of supernatural beings is equivalent to a year in the land of mortals—Black Bear said:

"I make you a shaman (I, p. 539). One end of your bow, as far as the middle, will be as if coated with power. If you have a quarrel with a man just wave that end towards him and he will fall dead. If you wish him to come to life again) wave the other end and he will be revived."

Then Black Bear took off his pelt and gave it to *Slokle*, saying, "If you want to strike down several people, put on my skin, scatter eagle down on it, and then shake yourself. The down will fly in all directions

McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NES Bellacoola NES
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he travelled the whole distance on a single billow, so asked to be sent on a four-billow wave. His canoe was a sea-lion's stomach, into which he climbed through the mouth and which he made watertight by tying up the entrance with the animal's entrails. Whether or not the creature was alive is not clear, but at any rate the man set off in the strange craft. He felt as if he were on the back of an animal which made long, easy, slow bounds; it was the slow surging of a gigantic Pacific comber. After four bounds he untied the neck and found himself at home.

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Certain names have been preserved from this myth. The name *Nɛqèqa* is now used by a dog, as the owner is the last of her family. Another name is *Tlaxumyuit*, "The Crash," derived from the metallic sound of the closing door of the sea-lion house. The name *Namatsta* was also obtained inside the house, but the details of its significance are lost.

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AN EARLY MYTH OF *Kilde-t*[1]

As has been said, ambitious individuals, especially if they lack origin myths of the customary kind, sometimes claim ordinary stories as such. The following is almost certainly a case in point. It was obtained from an unreliable informant, who claimed it as a family myth, and said he had used it at a potlatch. He asserted that it was a Bella Bella story, transmitted through the marriage of one of his ancestors with a Bella Bella woman. Another informant, well versed in Bella Bella folk-lore, recounted another version of the same myth as a mere tale. There seems little doubt that the first narrator had merely laid claim to a common story to supply the deficiency of a true myth.

In the beginning, there came down to earth at the head of Gas Bay, *Kilde-t*, a solitary man whose name was *Kɛdɛn-a*. He was so lonely that he made for himself from soft punky wood a woman, dressed her in blankets and clothing, and gave her the name, *Qwa'lems*, which is in the Bella Bella language. *Kɛdɛn-a* was a great hunter; every day he went out to seek mountain goats, which provided him with great quantities of grease, as well as yarn that he wove into blankets. Before leaving the house he always placed *Qwa'lems* in front of a loom, put food beside her and told her to eat as much as she liked and to work diligently.

[1] Related by Kimsquit Alec.

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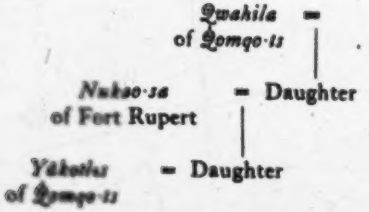
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[illegible] it is believed that a son of *Smaoan* married the daughter of a Kitlobe chief (I, p. 338). As dower she brought her husband several Kitlobe names, which were transmitted in time to her children and which remained in *Smaoan*'s home, Kimsquit, for many generations. The Bella Coola believe that it was remembered for hundreds of years that these designations did not belong there. Whenever one was conferred, the myth was recounted to tell how it first came to Kimsquit; whereas in Kitlobe when the myth from which the names were taken was related, it was always added that those in question could not be used since they were now in Kimsquit. About one hundred and fifty years ago, *Ätsiqutl*, a Kimsquit woman, was married to a Kitlobe man to repay this debt, and cement friendship between the two tribes. She took as dower the names long ago brought from Kitlobe. Similarly, if any name or other prerogative of an ancestral myth has been alienated from the ancestral family to which it belongs, a father searches for a woman who will be able to restore it to his son as a marriage gift. The word used for searching is "hunt," the term applied to seeking fur-bearing animals.

The accompanying pedigree illustrates a return marriage. *Qwahila*'s daughter was married to a Fort Rupert man and took with her as dower several Bella Coola names and other prerogatives. The loss of these was remembered and they were brought back by the marriage of *Yäkotlɛs*, a member of *Qwahila*'s ancestral family, with a daughter of the woman who had gone to Fort Rupert. Usually several generations elapse before a return marriage is made. This incident was perfectly well known to the son of *Yäkotlɛs*.



If parents who are seeking a wife for their son have also a daughter approaching marriageable age, they may try to avoid a later return marriage by arranging that their daughter shall be married to a brother, or other near relative, of their son's wife. Exchange marriage was formerly more common than

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

583 at present, though even now it is considered highly desirable.
[178] The sentiment is that already described: the more closely the parents are bound together by ties of common ancestry, the greater will be their children's ceremonial strength. Further, reciprocal alliances of this type obviate all danger of feuds, since return marriages are not required.

582 In recent years it has become fashionable, or socially
178 "smart," with some Bella Coola families to seek wives from
648 unrelated ancestral families, and even from other tribes. It is said that this practice was initiated by *Potlas*, an important chief who died between 1870 and 1880. He sought foreign marriages on acccount of the prerogatives which were brought as dowers by his wives, and considered that such rights, transmissable to his children, more than compensated for the lack of strength provided by related ancestors. Many have followed his example, with the result that some ancestral families have entirely abandoned the endogamic tendency. Boas (p. 124) has made the same observation. Although this exogamic
[581] principle is directly contrary to that which has already been described, yet it should be noted that each has the same explanation—the search for a wife able to bring most to her as yet unborn children.

584 Should the parents consider a foreign woman as wife for
581 their son, then her worth is discussed from every angle. One woman may have the right to good hunting grounds, the family of another may have some valuable *sisaok* prerogatives, a third some *kusiut* rites. Anxious thought is put on the relative values of these. One man had heard of the French system of *dot*, and emphasized strongly how far superior to, and more sensible it was than the Canadian practice. In recent years
[178] the younger Bella Coola have been arranging their own marriages, and the older men lament bitterly that they are influenced only by the beauty and working ability of the girl, not by her real worth, the prerogatives which she can bring to her children.

Although parents consider chiefly the ancestry of their

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

584 as soon as possible. Though strictly legal, and commonly practised even long ago, this is not considered a desirable preliminary, since the children lack the strength which would have been theirs if their parents had been long engaged. In recent
● 178 years the custom of short engagements has become popular,
584 though the older Bella Coola feel resentment, saying that the woman is simply "bought" with goods or money at the actual wedding. The return of such sums in due course does not compensate for the omission of the lengthy period of engagement. A few years ago a powerful chief even "bought" husbands for his grand-daughters. His influence was so great that by bestowing large sums on the families of the youths they accepted the young women as wives. The girls in question were desirable in every way, according to Bella Coola standards, but by marrying without a long engagement and suitable presents the husbands, and their families, failed to live up to the dignity of their ancestry. These are breakings down of the ancient rites, and as such are lamented by the older people.

583 Sometimes, despite the wishes of their parents, a boy and
584 girl announce their desire to marry by living together. After much storming, the parents usually decide to make the best of a bad business by performing the marriage rites as soon as possible and by lavish expenditure on them to lessen the impediment placed against the future offspring by lack of long engagement of their parents. But such a child can never be
[858] called an *älqim*, which has the significance of something good that has long been sought for, such as a smoothed-grained tree that carpenters like. It will thus be seen that the marriage ceremony must be carried out, irrespective of whether or not it has been preceded by a lengthy period of engagement in which the first proposal was made by the boy's family, by a shorter one in which the girl's family took the initiative, or by no period of engagement whatever. These rites can now be described.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

ciety. These are given several times, serving to recall the ceremonies in which the chief took part during his life. At intervals, the new song is repeated and *sisaok* members of the audience join in as they become familiar with the words. Frequently one or more relatives of the deceased dance in his stead during the singing. The details of this rite, especially of the songs used at it, differ considerably according to the actions of the person during life; if a mighty chief, the donor of many potlatches, this fact is described in the song, whereas only an incident from the ancestral myth can be used for a young *sisaok*. If some of his female relatives are professional wailers, they function during the ceremony. In all circumstances, the rite aims to comfort the grieving kinsmen, an end which it usually achieves.

As already described, *sisaok* ceremonial was in a state of transition at the time of the coming of the white man. Previous to that date, a spectacular funeral prerogative had been adopted from Rivers Inlet,[4] which has since been claimed by a number of *sisaok*. All the Bella Coola know of this ceremony, and most of them desire to perform it at the death of a dearly loved relative; at the present time this is possible owing to the slight regard paid to prerogatives, but it is certain that a few years ago it would have been forbidden to most people, and that it was never a universal Bella Coola rite.

When this rite is performed, the corpse is allowed to remain in its coffin for at least one night after the day on which *Mitlakila* came and the *sisaok* songs were sung. Meanwhile the carpenters have prepared an imitation body, usually of rags on a light framework, and a wooden representation of the deceased's crest. Since this figure is to come through the roof and carry aloft the corpse, stout hooks are attached to its feet. In theory, the bird or animal disguise used by the first ancestor

[4] One old Bella Coola stated that this prerogative was obtained during his own life-time from a Rivers Inlet chief who moved to *Tăl-ie*. It is impossible to state accurately when this ritual was adopted by the Bella Coola, though it is unquestionably of recent origin.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

575 766 [532] of the deceased, traced patrilineally, should come for the body, but this is difficult to arrange in case of whale, bear, and other marine or land mammals. Consequently, it has been customary to use only raven or eagle for this purpose, and it is assumed that at least one of these birds is present in the ancestral history of every individual as a result of the marriage of some of his forbears with a woman possessing one of these crests.[1] It is a common practice for an influential *sisaok* to prepare a figure of this kind during his life-time and tell a son or other trusted relative where it has been hidden; if this has been done, it obviates the necessity of carpenters manufacturing one at short notice.

Several days are often required to complete these arrangements, but on the first evening possible, which may be two or three days after the death, the people are summoned to the dead man's house. The singers take their usual positions behind the fire and beat out the song used at the mourning ceremony already described; then, as on that occasion, they follow it with a number of the deceased's *sisaok* songs. Once more they strike up the one newly composed and, as it is proceeding, whistling is heard, accompanied by the screaming of an eagle or the croaking of a raven. Those who are not members of the *sisaok* society do not understand that these sounds are produced by hidden members blowing whistles on the roof. There is a crash on the planking and, through a space opened by the removal of several boards, the face of the bird crest can be seen peering in. It is a dramatic spectacle and the audience gasps appreciatively, especially those who see in it a manifestation of the supernatural, testifying to the importance of the deceased. If the stage management has been accurate, the figure appears at the termination of the song, but if it has arrived during the actual singing, the singers beat time slowly and cease to use their voices. The eagle, or raven, keeps squealing repeatedly and gradually comes through

[178]

[1] The use of only raven or eagle is probably a degeneration due to recent decay of custom.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

body became eagle down and was wafted upwards is psychologically of the type which might serve as basis for a rite of this kind. If the descendants of the person to whom this had happened had dramatized the incident at subsequent deaths, a custom analogous to the one here described would have arisen.

DISPOSAL OF THE BODY

There is no fixed time for the disposal of a corpse. When possible, it takes place on the day following death, but as many as four days may elapse if delay is necessary for the performance of the rite just described. Another reason for postponement is the absence of near relatives; if they can be summoned within four or five days, the funeral may be delayed until their arrival. There is always endless discussion concerning the exact details; all relatives and members of the ancestral family take part, though the wishes of a son, brother, or other near kinsman are usually followed. In this, as in so many points of Bella Coola ritual, an influential chief often overrules the desires even of those who are more closely related to the deceased.

Heralds announce the hour chosen,[1] usually about noon, and the people begin to assemble in the deceased's house, even strangers being welcome. Women wail dolorously, and another indication of the occasion is the bundles containing clothing, cooking utensils, and other articles belonging to the dead person. The lid of the coffin has been left open, but when everything is ready, an elderly man is asked to strike it, once, with a stone; then the lid is closed. Planks have been removed and a hole made in one of the front corners of the house, through which the man throws out the stone. The women redouble their lamentations as an old woman, previously asked to do so, lights a bundle of dyed and undyed cedar-bark and climbs through the opening carrying this. No request has been made for pall-bearers, but any strong men, especially

[1] This is done at present, even after the carrying away of the "body." In former times it was omitted when the corpse was secretly buried by the *sisaok*.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

764 are never disturbed, being considered, in some vague way, "bad." The tools used for digging the grave are left standing upright in the loose earth, an action for which no explanation can be given by the Bella Coola. When these various rites have been performed, the funeral party returns to the village and disperses.

766 845 At present, interment is the customary method for disposing of the bodies of all except twins, whose bodies are placed in trees. Formerly, other means were sometimes employed, as 764 they still are occasionally. Instead of inhumation, a coffin 178 was frequently placed on a scaffold close behind the deceased's house. Whenever another relative died, planks were laid across, above the first box, and the new one deposited on these, so that in time the scaffold grew to resemble a house-like structure with many compartments. In the last century a certain shaman, *Åskankots* by name, is said to have pointed out that corpses were frequently carried off by wolves, *snuuq*, and other animals. For this reason he persuaded the people to inter their dead.

764 Somewhat similar to this practice was the placing of corpses in trees. Until the last few years this was sometimes done with poor children; formerly, it was not unknown even for chiefs. An elderly Kimsquit man mentioned that the coffin containing the body of his grandfather, a chief, was placed in the crotch of a tree where no rain could penetrate. This means of disposal was probably never habitual. Even at the present time, the corpse of a dearly loved child is occasionally placed above, instead of under the ground. If the parents desire to do this, they erect in the cemetery a carved figure of one of their crests and deposit the coffin on top of it. This is, of course, a graphic representation of the deceased's origin myth and symbolizes the way in which the dead person has become associated with it.

According to several of the older men, cremation was practised by the Bella Coola for some time after the first settlement of the earth. A fire was built outside the house and the body

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

177 squatting, now it is customary to use the extended position.
764 It is impossible to state whether this is the direct result of white teaching, or whether the ease with which large boxes can now be made has led to interment at full length.

RITES FOLLOWING DISPOSAL OF THE BODY

768 Interment of the corpse does not end the ceremonial necessitated by a death in the community. As already described, some of the clothing and utensils of the dead person are burned during the funeral, but all are not destroyed at that time. The proportion kept for future treatment is immaterial, nor is there any established usage concerning the type of object reserved. During the days following the funeral, relatives of the deceased carefully gather his clothing, cooking utensils, rifles, and all other articles which have been his personal property or used exclusively by him. On the fourth day, these are taken to the cemetery by his immediate family, accompanied by as many of their friends as wish to show their sympathy. A fire is kindled near the grave and on it is deposited whatever can be burnt; other objects are either cast into the flames or piled near at hand (see Plate 17). It is most important that every article belonging to the deceased should be disposed of in this way. There are two reasons for this. First, it is considered indecent to use the possessions of a dead person; they would have the effect of poison on anyone doing so. Secondly, the ghost of the de-
775 ceased receives goods that are burnt or deposited on the grave
753 four days after the funeral. If deprived of what belongs to him, a ghost punishes the offenders by causing sickness.
178 Occasionally a new rifle, or some other treasured possession,
768 is kept by a relative or friend; this is contrary to the established custom, but is justified by considering the article to be a gift from the deceased or a memento of him. No one would accept such a legacy unless he felt sure that the dead man

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

entertained such kindly sentiments towards him that he would be glad to have his friend receive it.

In recent years the number of incombustible objects has increased enormously with the introduction of metal utensils, gramophones, and other things obtained from white traders. Although these are considered to be of use to the ghost, and must be carefully placed near the grave, they can be publicly exchanged for others by a relative. The sentiments expressed on such occasions are that the ghost, though aware of what is taking place, does not resent an open transfer; and that it is unnecessary to deposit the equivalent of what has been removed. There is undoubtedly a vague idea that the ghost uses, not the actual object, but its essence, which is received by the deposition. It must be emphasized that this feeling has not become crystallized to such a state that it is customary to replace goods laid on the grave with others. Such an exchange is a rare event and would cause animosity if carried out by anyone except a near relative.

Sometimes a dying person requests that a house be erected over his grave, a common Bella Bella custom. This is built immediately after the funeral and articles that cannot be burnt are placed within it instead of being piled on the ground. The sorrowing relatives may choose to erect a picket fence around the spot, but no other mark for the grave is put up until a memorial potlatch several years after death. House or fence soon falls into decay and rarely an effort is made to repair either. Nor is the grave itself disturbed. Cow-parsnips, which are much used for food, grow frequently in cemeteries, but no one would gather the shoots that rise above a grave; they are food belonging to the dead person. The white man has taught the Bella Coola how to plant apple-trees and these are often set out in graveyards, though the fruit is allowed to fall to the ground for the benefit of those interred beneath. The Bella Bella are said formerly to have replaced at intervals the coffin containing a dead person, but this seems never to have been a Bella Coola practice. Indeed, a grave is never

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

*556 diate family. Confusion is probable only when a chief is
769 bereaved after he has stored up goods and made preliminary preparations for a potlatch; he may then carry out the rites intended, but designate the ceremony a memorial potlatch.
[575] More often, however, the affair is limited to rites associated with the deceased. Consequently, there is omission of the initiation of neophytes into the *ɬɑaok* and *a'alk* societies,[11] there is no establishment of new seats for young relatives of the
[184] donor, and no strengthening of his own. It must be emphasized once more that there is no unalterable sequence of prescribed rituals at either potlatch or memorial potlatch; the omissions just mentioned are customary, not universal, and when present the ritual of the two ceremonies is identical. Except on those rare occasions when omitted at a potlatch, the return of a dead relative is the central feature of both.

[178] In recent years, the great increase in wealth has made it possible for a chief to perform a memorial potlatch soon after the death of an esteemed relative. This was rarely the case in former times, but as there was no other reason for which valuables were so ardently desired, every expedient was used to obtain the necessary goods. Occasionally, a chief happened to have the needful goods stored up so that he could give a memorial potlatch almost immediately. To such a fortunate individual the term, *yeotla*, was applied, a word difficult to translate but combining the significances of *rich*, *ready*, *fortunate*, and *revered*.

[796] Memorial potlatches, like those of the ordinary kind, are usually held in the early autumn, though occasionally one may be postponed until after the *kusiut* season. When an intending donor has decided that he owns sufficient goods, he first calls in his fellow-chiefs and makes known his intentions, at the same time expounding in considerable detail the myths which
[533] he proposes to use as themes for mourning songs, and for other

[11] Performance of such rites at a memorial potlatch would be considered sinful by the Bella Bella and were always omitted during the period when their influence was important.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[554] [760] departed. A few days later the same ritual was carried out again, with a similar lavish distribution of food. This was often done at intervals of two or three days for several weeks, depending on how much food the donor was prepared to use. The amount required was so great that the rite was considered, in some ways, more difficult than a potlatch.

[178] As already mentioned, however, it became customary in the last century to incorporate features of the ordinary potlatch into one of a memorial nature. In such cases the first [533] singing of the mourning songs with display of marks by the professional mourners is as just recorded, but there is no recalling of the guests merely to listen once more to the songs. Instead, the ritual differs but slightly from that of an ordinary potlatch as already described (I, p. 182). An occasion is found to conduct the guests to the memorial-posts erected, and to in- [178] form them of the significance of the designs depicted. This same practice has been continued since the introduction of tombstones, and the meaning of the writing upon them is interpreted. The entry of the deceased in the form of his crest, and the subsequent use of a copper, is the same as already recorded. This is frequently followed by the singing of a *nusek* mourning [533] song if one of the near relatives owns this prerogative of foreign origin. If so, he walks slowly around the fire in a wide circle, shaking his rattle, and singing, unaccompanied. Most, if not all [177] of these songs, are in the Bella Bella language and the right to [425] use one has in every case been obtained through intermarriage with a member of that tribe. At intervals, heralds call out:

"Listen to the chief's lament."[1]

When presents are distributed to validate the whole ceremony, mention is always made of the different features for which they are given. As at a potlatch, the most important is the return of the dead, but at a memorial potlatch another [211] essential is the display of the memorial-posts. These have been [764] carved, painted, and set up, but are worthless unless validated

[1] There is no reason why this should not take place at a potlatch, but no instance of its performance was noted.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

556 769 a man and assuage his sorrow to know that he has shown fitting respect to the dead, there is also a gain in social prestige. As the whole community respects, admires, and sometimes envies a man for having carried out a memorial potlatch, there is no doubt that he is pleased and gratified to such an extent that his grief is dulled. These two factors must constantly be kept in mind; memorial potlatches serve to commemorate the dead, but in so doing they add to the social importance of the donors. The two combine to bring considerable comfort to the chief who has lost a dear relative. In some cases the social prestige is the real motive, the grief assumed and unimportant; but in others the latter is the only factor that matters, and a chief is entirely oblivious to any increase in his own status. In most memorial potlatches, both feelings are present in the mind of the donor, and both are gratified.

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF A FUNERAL

764 114 In the preceding pages, an attempt has been made to describe the traditional death rites of the Bella Coola. The following section comprises a detailed account of funeral ceremonies witnessed in 1922. The contrast between these and the ones already recorded, will indicate some of the changes [178] in custom which are of such importance in studies of cultural [182] growth or decline. The following description will also serve [57] to demonstrate a point repeatedly mentioned, the manner in which business transactions and arrangements of all kinds take place whenever the people have been called together.

[123] On June 27, 1922, the death occurred in Bella Coola of Jessie, Mrs. Samuel King, daughter of Captain Schooner. The latter, now deceased, was one of the writer's most trusted friends, and as a result of this friendship it was possible not only to attend the actual rites, but to ascertain much of the feeling underlying them. This advantage had its drawbacks, since it was manifestly impossible to question either the father or the husband of the woman too closely. The details will be de-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

764 159 stepson, George Nelson, had not been living with his wife for about one year.

Early in the afternoon of June 27, Captain Schooner was notified by telephone of the serious illness of his daughter at the cannery where she was working. He set out immediately, but found her dead on his arrival. Without waiting to consult Samuel King, he called together the chiefs who happened to be [622] in the vicinity, Willie Mack, Jim Pollard, Billy Pollard, Bobby Nebby, and Alexander Clallaman.[11] He informed them that 764 he did not propose to let his daughter be thrown carelessly into 769 the ground like a dog, but that he was going to hold a memorial potlatch immediately after the funeral. Schooner, being a *556 *numiit* chief as well as father of the dead woman, was able to 159 do as he liked, and no one objected to this plan, although in [178] former times such a ceremony neither took place at once, nor in summer. If Samuel had been present, he would have been consulted as a matter of course. It was quite fitting for Jessie to be buried by her father, since she had borne her husband no children, and had been rebought several times. Moreover, Samuel lacked the determination and prestige of his father-in-law. Having settled this main point, Captain Schooner intimated that as Jessie's granddaughter, Dan Nelson's infant, was at the point of death, it would be well to combine the mourning for both at the single ceremony. No mention was made of the amount to be used for the rite. Schooner himself had $200 to expend for the purpose which would have been sufficient, and his attitude was that he neither knew nor cared whether his relatives would assist him. Soon after the other chiefs had left, Reuben Schooner arrived from the logging-camp from which he had been summoned. Father and son discussed arrangements not only for the actual interment, a simple matter, but for the memorial potlatch. It was decided that the dead woman should return as a composite figure consisting

[11] None of these was closely related to the Schooner family.

I:McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924)1948
NE4 Bellacoola NE4

of Eagle, Raven, and Blackfish, three of her crests of which the masks were available. They agreed that Timothy Snow[11] was the best carpenter available and that he should be commissioned to put them in shape and arrange their use. Reuben wanted to sing a *tsaask* mourning song, to which he had a prerogative derived from his Bella Bella mother, and it was also decided that the band[12] should play. Reuben informed his father that he would contribute $60 towards the expenditure.

Meanwhile Jessie had been washed by female friends, clad in her best clothing, and laid in her coffin. This was a rough box, contributed by the manager of the cannery and shaped like a white man's coffin. At intervals, women came near and wailed dolorously without heeding others similarly engaged. The news was carried to all the Bella Coola, those men who owned gasoline launches taking the word to the logging-camps without being requested to do so. A Carrier Indian who happened to be returning from the cannery spread the word through the village, where each woman who received the message hurried off to some friend, with whom she began to wail.

Early on the following morning, Captain Schooner returned home with his wife, Jessie's stepmother. He had been crying and was sad, but seemed willing to talk. He spoke of the proposed memorial potlatch, and expressed the sentiments recorded on vol. I, p. 473. He was grave and dignified, absolutely determined to perform what he considered to be the necessary ritual, oblivious of consequences, and heedless of what he held to be an unjust law. During that summer, Captain Schooner had been a rather heavy drinker, but on this occasion he abstained from wine, and said that he hoped no one would show disrespect to his daughter by appearing in a drunken condition either at the funeral or the subsequent rites. It is

[11] He was not closely related to the Schooners.

[12] Most of the younger Bella Coola were members of the band, performing white men's music on white men's instruments. Andy Schooner was bandmaster, but it is unlikely that this influenced the decision, since the performance of the band was customary at funerals when the writer was in Bella Coola.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

for the Carriers and other foreigners. The cook began to ladle the rice into basins provided by Captain Schooner; these were taken by some of the younger men who poured helpings into the dishes of the guests. Spoons had been forgotten, and there was delay until these were provided by slivers split from a block of wood for the purpose. Contrary to ancient usage, no attempt was made to serve food to the guests in order of their rank. Men, women, and children were sitting everywhere, the infants kept moving around and crying continually throughout the performance, but no one seemed to be disturbed thereby.

When everyone had eaten, Nebuchadnezzar, who had been sitting facing the other singers, beat on the floor to attract attention and then rose to speak. He asked the help of all to make the ceremony a success, and thus assuage the grief of the bereaved relatives.

Joe Williams and his daughter had taken their places on the right-hand side of the hall and had requested Willie Mack, a fluent speaker and influential chief, to assist them in announcing the financial transactions. They spread a blanket on the floor on which the bills were counted, and beside this Willie knelt. Joe gave him a sum of money, which was counted and re-counted; Willie then held it up in the vain hope that it could be seen by everyone in the hall. He announced the amount, also that it was to rebuy (the divorced) Mrs. George Nelson from her late husband, and that it would "make clean the place where she sat." A young man delivered the money to George who added it to the general stock for later distribution. Next a copper was produced, held up, and presented to him for the same purpose. Meanwhile Joe, assisted by his mother and other relatives, had been counting the money which they proposed to give to Captain Schooner in settlement of the previously contracted debt. One hundred and fifty dollars were produced and handed to Willie Mack, who held them up and announced that it was in return for the $100 given by Captain Schooner on a previous occasion to Joe Williams, his wife, his son, his daughter, his mother, and his stepfather. The bills

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

"Child, *you are an eagle now. You are like Xemcua.*[10] He will provide an eagle cloak for you." 769

The theme was continued throughout as if Captain Schooner were speaking and lamenting his daughter. At intervals the phrase was repeated, "My child has fled home." The leader of the singers, Jim Pollard in this case, kept calling out to the audience to cry and sing, and as many of them joined in as had come in earlier to listen to the words. The whole effect was strikingly dignified and impressive. 556* 533

Captain Schooner joined the singers for the second mourning song, since he alone was familiar with the details of the ancestral myth which formed the theme. In former times a bereaved parent would never have been obliged to assist in this way. Kimsquit Alec had composed the tune during the day and Billy Pollard called out the words, line by line, inviting the guests to join in. The theme consisted of instructions to Jessie: [178]

"Go," it ran, "To the mountain whither *Qyil*[11] came. Thence travel to the Skeena where you will assume the form of a whale and be able to spout like one.[12] Go then to the far north where you will enter the copper house within which dwells a copper raven and where the salmon are *taitaimx*."[13]

This song was sung in the manner already described.

The third mourning song was one composed for a *Tăl·io* chief, *Smaoxsk*, who had lost his daughter during the smallpox epidemic. Its use was justifiable, as *Smaoxsk* was Jessie's mother's mother's mother's brother. It had a double significance since the dead woman's mother had allowed it to be used when lamenting the death of a brother of Samuel King, a member of the same ancestral family. Captain Schooner had altered the words to make them applicable to the present situation. The theme was:

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[10] One of the first settlers of the earth, an ancestor of Jessie.
[11] Another of her first ancestors.
[12] One of Jessie's first ancestors had landed on the Skeena and there assumed the form and characteristics of a whale.
[13] An incident in one of Jessie's ancestral myths.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

769
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"Please stop crying. We have made good your memory. You are a light to your brother. Go to *Smaoxuk* where he stands among the abalone-shells far to the south."[a] Thence go overland to Rivers Inlet where a *xpämtsk* will serve as canoe for you." You will see the long house where your ancestor obtained shaman's power."[b]

Meanwhile Reuben Schooner had been out of sight behind the curtain of the stage. After a short interval, he emerged [292] wearing a blue blanket decorated with mother-of-pearl buttons sewn on in raven design. He was followed by two other influential members of the *nusuk* society, Alexander Clallaman and Nebuchadnezzar, similarly attired. Reuben began to sing in a low, sad, penetrating voice of considerable musical power and, followed by the other two, walked slowly in a sunwise circle around the hall, all the time shaking his right hand, held projecting outwards at right angles from his elbow. The song was in Bella Bella, and even the singer did not fully understand the meaning, and few of the audience had any idea of its significance. When the three had almost completed the first circuit, someone brought Reuben a rattle, which he clutched in his right hand as he continued his way. The reason of the shaking at once became evident; he should have had a rattle throughout [178] but few of these were left in Bella Coolla at the time and it had not been possible to borrow one before beginning his song. Again the three slowly circled the hall, Alexander and Nebuchadnezzar calling out at intervals:

"Listen to the mourning song of the chief."

After the second circuit of the hall, Reuben paused near the singers and spoke to Alec Davis, a *nusuk sïsi*. The latter [424] rose and stated how the prerogative of *sïsi*, including the right to sing, unaccompanied, a mourning song on occasions such as this had been transmitted both to Reuben and his brother Harry from *Ae-sti*, a Bella Bella chief to whom they were

[a] An incident in one of Jenness's ancestral myths.
[b] An incident in one of Jenness's ancestral myths.
[c] An incident in one of Jenness's ancestral myths.

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

related through their mother. After a little further discussion, Harry took the rattle from his brother and began to sing as he walked around the hall, followed by Alexander and Nebuchadnezzar. Harry was less familiar than his brother with the proper words, but supplied this deficiency by humming. He was also less at ease, and he lacked the musical ability which had made his brother's singing so impressive. After a single circuit, he restored the rattle to Reuben, who continued to go around the hall as he sang. This time he paused at intervals, and kept glancing towards the door, his whole attitude betraying that something was interfering with the previously arranged plans. The purpose of the singing was to summon the dead woman in the form of her crest, but she did not appear. In early times those who were not ASAAS were told that the words and music penetrated to the upper regions, reminding the deceased of the grief of his relatives and persuading him to return. This belief had passed away at the time of the ceremony here described, but the fiction was continued, and it had been planned that the representation of the deceased should enter when the song was finished. It later transpired that the delay was due to a number of white people who, having gathered at the doorway, made the performer unwilling to put on his masks and disguise. Reuben continued to sing half-heartedly, and finally cried out:

"Perhaps I have lost my power, it does not come."

Alec Davis, who had previously left the hall, came rushing in and called out in a loud voice:

"*Tsmoala* [Jessie's ancestral name and the one in connection with which she had been made a chief] is coming. She has been to the scenes of her ancestral myths. Her crests have taken her. She comes as Eagle, Raven, and Blackfish, bearing her grandchild."[a]

The speaker is a morose, rather surly individual, usually undignified and often drunk, but on this occasion his manner had changed in a remarkable degree. His eyes were bright, his

[a] Although not yet dead, all hope had been abandoned for the child's recovery.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE5 Bellacoola NE5

lowed the actor, blowing eagle down over him repeatedly. After one circuit of the hall, the performer passed out through the front door, from the vicinity of which was heard once more the large whistles and the screaming of the eagle, both growing less distinct as if the bird were flying away.

The wearer of the mask displayed considerable dramatic talent and succeeded in giving a realistic display in spite of the glaring lights which exposed his bare feet and betrayed the human handicraft of the mask in a manner impossible in the native type of house with a single, central fire as the sole illumination. The Carriers had watched the performance with interest, probably tinged with contempt, but to the Bella Coola it was no mere spectacle, it was a religious rite of the highest importance. All the spectators realized that the figure was human, but this seemed inconsequential as they gazed upon the representation of the dead woman in the form of her crests, to which they believed she had been transformed by death. Even the children were silent, and the only sound during the passage was the wailing of a sleepy infant. The eagle crest belonged to Jessie by virtue of membership in the ancestral family descended from her father's first ancestor, traced patrilineally, who had come to earth at *Tsmesl* in the form of this bird. The blackfish was a crest acquired through her mother; the raven represented a copper raven belonging to an ancestral myth of the dying grandchild. In former times, carpenters would have worked for weeks preparing an elaborate composite figure, but Captain Schooner wished no delay in the ceremony for fear of police interference, so that it was necessary to use what masks happened to be in existence and to place them in conjunction by means of the crude white sheet. Jessie had not been initiated into the *nusuk* society, but no opposition was raised to the use of *nusuk* whistles both on account of her status as chief, and owing to the influence of her father who, a *numit* chief, feared no restrictions and heeded no conventions. Besides, both her brothers were influ-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

769
* 556 ential *mask*. In former times it is certain that objections would have been raised to this breach of ceremonial privilege.

[424] There was a pause for several minutes after the withdrawal
[178] of the figure. Then Reuben threw a copper on the floor in the
[575] track taken by the actor "to make bone for the dead woman."
[622] A number of chiefs went forward to join the singers and discuss whether or not the copper should be redeemed. No one wished to do so, so Captain Schooner said he would have it fastened to a post over Jessie's grave, a proposition to which all agreed.

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* 556 After interminable discussion in which Captain Schooner,
533 Nebuchadnezzar, Reuben Schooner, Jim Pollard, and Alec Davis took the principal parts, it was decided to sing the fourth mourning song at this point. There was no reason why this should not have been done at the customary time, after the other three, but wide latitude in detail was allowed in this
[178] ceremony; in fact, exact ritual never flourished in Bella Coola and has become increasingly rare in recent years. This song had been composed a number of years previously when Captain Schooner had called in the Bella Bella to a memorial potlatch, and great care had been expended on its composition owing to the skill of the guests in songs of this type. The words, altered to fit the circumstances, were phrased as if George and Dan were lamenting the loss of their mother and other relatives.

"I, we," they ran, "are thinking of our mother, our brothers, our sisters, our mother's brothers, our mother's sisters, our father's brothers, our father's sisters, of all our dead relatives. Please, ye chiefs from abroad, turn your heads, listen to our wail. You revered great ones, let us all cry together. It is we who have called you hither; look upon us."

This song was sung in the manner already described, except that more of the Bella Coola were familiar with the words and tune and could accordingly join in.

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* 556 Meanwhile Captain Schooner, with his sons Reuben and Harry and his grandsons George Nelson and Andy Schooner, had been crouching in a corner of the hall, poring over the money which was to be distributed to validate the ceremony,

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

like power, and will tell their son to try the same method. In this way a descendant of shamans has a better chance to become one than anybody else. Another indication that a person is likely to become a shaman is to be wakened from sleep by a mouse. As he sits up, hastily, thinking that someone has called him, all that he sees is the disappearing rodent. Mice have a rather peculiar position in the eyes of the Bella Coola, since they believe that these animals regard themselves as superior to mankind.

"The food of mortals is our food," say the mice.

His parents now tell the boy that he is likely to become a shaman, and that he must accordingly take great care of himself. If he is an adult, he will begin to observe ceremonial chastity, and in any case will spend much time alone, avoiding the trivialities of life in the village, and will think little about mundane matters. At intervals he goes alone to the forest, especially to some spot beside a waterfall, the kind of place that supernatural beings frequent. Here he lies down, sometimes for several days, with evergreen boughs spread beneath and above him. These are clean and nullify the mortal odour so objectionable to supernatural beings, so that his chance of obtaining a visitation is increased. He does not know what may appear to him, but he carefully remembers his dreams[1] which, as his thoughts are centred on lofty subjects, are likewise about matters of importance. If his dream is sufficiently clear to warrant the term vision, the recipient should remain, fasting, for four days on the spot where it occurred, and should say nothing about it when he returns home. His strength increases with every vision, until at last, sometimes after a period of thirty years or more, he will obtain a real one and the power to cure a disease. Sometimes dreams come to him in the village, but they are more likely to occur in a secluded spot in the forest. It is impossible to obtain examples of these dreams since, for a long time, no one has been brave enough to seek

[1] The Bella Coola do not differentiate between mental images that appear in sleep and visions seen during waking hours.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

power in this way, but their type can be judged by the shamanistic performances hereafter described, many of which are believed to have been derived from them.

The members of different families have remembered various means of making a person "clean" so that a supernatural being is likely to visit him. Almost every family knows one or more of these, and an individual who shows signs of becoming a shaman will be taught how to use his family method. In conjunction with this, the seeker after power will further purify himself by abstaining from sexual intercourse, by frequent washing in hot springs, by eating small portions of the tails of snakes and the heads of toads, and by avoiding food prepared by a widow or by a girl secluded after puberty. In this way he hopes that his dreams will be fruitful, and that a vision may be granted him as he lies in the forest on his evergreen couch.

The following are some of the methods to be practised at dawn every fourth day.

(1) The seeker after power locates a small stream on either side of which there are growing two shoots of devil's club. At dawn he breaks off the four stems and strips from them the bark, which he uses to scrub himself in the cold water. As he does so he says:

"Please give me power that I may see what I wish to see."

This is addressed to the plant itself, not to the supreme god. It is a request to be able to see some one of the many supernatural beings that roam the forests, but which are invisible, or appear only as animals, to all but shamans. The words are not a fixed formula, and similar ones are said in connection with each method. After washing, the seeker for power throws the bark and peeled stem into the water.

(2) Again selecting a secluded stream, the would-be shaman picks up a smooth, water-worn pebble from one side of it, and with this rubs his body, then carefully replaces it in the exact position from which he took it. He repeats the process with a second stone, crosses the stream and does likewise with two stones from the farther margin.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

* 756 789 cealed cord succeeded in drawing feathers, previously placed on the surface, around in the direction in which she was dancing. It was impossible to learn the details of the method employed in this trick. The subterfuge was long ago practised by a shaman.

A simple but effective trick was the substitution of a baton made of light maple wood for one of the heavy type used by the singers. The real stick had been passed around the audience and apparently returned to one of the singers, though in reality the false one had been given to him. As he beat time the hollow sound that emanated was a source of surprise to the uninitiated spectators, nor was their wonder lessened when a real baton was again handed around, as if it were the one that had been in use.

● [178] According to an informant, the last time that a supernatural being helped the person on whom it had conferred shamanistic power to perform a rite of this kind was about 1870. A man who had fallen from his canoe into the ocean was rescued, but for a long time was ill as a result of exposure. [776 787] River Measurer, the supernatural being who governs the height of tides in the river, appeared and made him a shaman with the ability to cure through the use of a wash-basin. As this shaman danced, he had a large box filled with water. Presently he called on one of the uninitiated to examine the height of the water and point out to his fellows how high it was. A little later he called a second man who likewise indicated on the outside of the box the height of the liquid within. It had fallen, though its disappearance seemed inexplicable.

781 789 The above furnishes a good example of the attitude of the uninitiated. The informant, a very intelligent Bella Coola, gave a number of instances of the conjuring methods employed, some of which he had helped to carry out. Unquestionably, this was of the same nature, yet, because he was deceived at the time of its performance, he readily believed that the rite was supernatural; since then he had never thought of doubting

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

them renders it more likely that they will grant his requests. Therefore, a shaman is usually called upon to perform the following rites:

(1) Washing the mouth of a person who has died without voiding from his body the first salmon or olachen of the season (I, p. 436).

(2) Asking assistance for the complicated rites of the potlatch (I, p. 192).

(3) Request for assistance before starting on a journey, by puffing eagle down into the air (I, p. 106).

(4) Request for aid by means of placing food on the water and blowing eagle down into the air at Mesatche Nose and Kwatna (I, p. 109).

In fact a supplication to any supernatural being can be made with greater prospect of success by a shaman than by any other person.

The Power of Shamans

As has been said, a shaman actually has power within himself, and this is so strong that it may be a source of danger to others. If a man should pass behind one so endowed when the latter is eating, his spirit would be drawn from his body into the shaman's mouth, which would close with a click, crushing the spirit and killing the man. This is quite involuntary on the part of the shaman. It happened more than once among the early inhabitants, and since that time people have been very careful not to pass behind an eating shaman; this taboo was still in force until about 1885. A shaman, too, is said to be able to recall a spirit which has left its body, and thus caused illness. It is believed by some that shamans can see the position of a person's tally post, and so judge the length of his life. These examples show the varying beliefs of different Bella Coola concerning the powers of shamans.

But the force within the shaman is really more dangerous to its possessor than to others. As certain "unclean" objects are able to subdue supernatural beings, so do these same ob-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

a lad has been drowned in spite of efforts to rescue him, means that a beaver has been caught. 787 * 224

To dream of seeing a *kusiut* dancer in full costume means that a fisher, lynx, wolverine, mountain goat, wolf, or black bear has been caught.

To dream of fighting people, especially if arrows are used, means that a grizzly bear has been caught.

To dream of playing children means that deer will be seen the following day.

To dream of swimming means that an otter has been caught.

To dream of fondling a woman and playing with her breasts means that a marten has been caught.

Obscene dreams mean that squirrels or pack-rats have been caught.

To dream of a woman with whom the hunter has held illicit intercourse means that absolutely nothing has been caught.

Until recent years these interpretations were believed without question and no hunter bothered to examine his traps unless he had received such indications of success. A hunter's wife likewise obtains information of her husband's fortune in dreams. [178]

All dreams cannot be translated. One man, for example, stated that in his sleep he had often seen a supernatural being enter his house, turn to the left, pick up one of the heavy floor boards and carry it around the fire as if it had been a tray. The apparition always told him to do likewise, but though he has tried repeatedly in his dreams, he has always found it too heavy. Such an image might serve a shaman as theme for a dramatic performance, though, of course, the element of curing the sick would be lacking. Another dream experienced several times by the same man when ill is that of being carried with the speed of light to a flat land somewhat similar to this, but located on the top of a range of lofty mountains. It contains numerous grassy meadows studded with trees of which the 787 * [756]

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

beneath the surface, and throw it in a second time. Repeat this four times. If the wrapping has been carefully fastened, little water leaks in and the child suffers no discomfort. This causes him to grow up confident and brave with regard to canoeing and every kind of activity on the river. Like the last medicine, this is not potent for one who has held sexual intercourse. It cannot be applied to a girl since beaver are unfavourable to women who must observe many taboos concerning them.

To Cause Modesty and Respect for One's Elders

When a boy is about six or eight years of age, his father beats him lightly, four times, with a rope-end. This is done in the early morning, then he takes his son to wash immediately. Four days later the beating and washing are repeated. From this time on, a parent should whip his son four times every fourth morning until he is old enough to marry. The force of the chastisements increases as the lad grows older, so that when he is about fourteen years of age, he is beaten with the full force of his parent's arm. It is a point of honour for a lad to endure his whippings without whimpering; one who shows the pain he is suffering is laughed at by his fellows and not allowed to wash with them. This medicine makes a child strong, manly, respectful to his elders, and, generally, the type of individual to whom supernatural beings are likely to show favour.

This practice has long been discontinued and it was impossible to learn whether or not it had ever been carried out with full vigour. Several of the older men stated that in their childhood they had been beaten periodically by their fathers, but none had had this last over a period of years. It was claimed that such had been the case in earlier times, but it seems almost certain that this type of chastisement could never have been carried out regularly. During the winter, for example, when *kusiut* dances were taking place, the whole community used to sleep late and it is improbable that a father rose every fourth

2: Mcllwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

535 contact with supernatural beings, so that it is a time for grave
*575 thoughts and decorous behaviour. Even by day the members
796 pass from house to house with dignified mien, not loitering
[787] around the sidewalks nor indulging in frivolity. Every effort is made to prevent quarrels between members who are expected to show by their appearance and actions the gravity of the rites in which they are engaged. Night after night they assemble at the house wherein the dance is taking place; those who have performed, and are therefore most closely in touch with the supernatural, even sleep there, not returning to their own houses until March. A dance usually lasts four nights, and during that time the performer's house, in which it takes place, is termed a *nuqpik*, "An Empty House." The significance of this designation is unknown.

178 Membership in the society depends on a duly validated
*575 ancestral prerogative to perform one of the many *kusiut* dances.
[424] At the present time every Bella Coola is a *kusiut*, even babes in arms being initiated, but formerly no one was admitted until he or she had reached an age of discretion. Some informants went so far as to say that the hair of an initiate must have begun to turn grey, and all agreed that no one was ever admitted until at least twenty, or more often, twenty-five years of age. Initiates were frequently still older; one woman, for example, stated that her mother was past the age of child-
[551] bearing before admission. Since only a member of the society could be called by a *kusiut* name, the uninitiated continued to be known by the ancestral names conferred on them at infancy until they received *kusiut* designations. The importance of the
178 society depends on the belief of the uninitiated in the super-
*575 natural powers of its members, and as there are now none to
796 impress, the rites carried out today are little more than pic-
128 tures of what took place years ago. It is the aim of the Bella Coola to carry out the dances as if uninitiated persons were in attendance, and since most of the following information was obtained from men who well remembered their sensations when not members of the society, it is justifiable to use the present

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

tense throughout this chapter, and to assume the presence of a number of young men and women ignorant of the significance of the rites. Formerly, the *kukusiut* often had difficulty in impressing the uninitiated with their prowess, and feuds with the *a'alk* were common.

Although membership in the *kusiut* society depends on an ancestral prerogative, it is essentially a democratic institution. A certain amount of wealth is necessary to validate a *kusiut* prerogative, but nothing comparable to that required for a potlatch; in fact, poor men are often persons of great importance within the ranks of the society. Nor are the prerogatives considered to be as valuable as ancestral rights, so that slaves are often admitted as *kukusiut* by their masters. An important *kusiut* is not esteemed by the community in the same way as the donor of many potlatches; in short, membership in the society brings limited ceremonial and semi-religious advantage, not social prestige of a public nature.

Powers and Functions of the Society

Any secret society can be viewed from the standpoints of a member, and of a non-member. The scope of the *kusiut* organization can be most clearly outlined by describing first what an uninitiated person knows about it. From his infancy, parents impress upon a child the supernatural powers of the *kukusiut* and the dangers attached to their rites. Such instruction is perhaps strongest where one, or both, is not a member. They then voice their own fears, and do not merely deceive for the good of the society. Steeped as every child is in a firm belief of the near presence of the supernatural, he readily believes what he is told. He learns, for example, that if, without special invitation, he dares enter the house where a *kusiut* dance is taking place—at any time during the four days or more that it lasts—his spirit will be drawn from him. This is sufficient to deter him from prying too closely into the rites. Strangely enough, there seem always to have been differences in teaching with respect to this deception. It is believed that if a non-

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

untranslatable word with the significance of "One who has suffered loss through faulty concealment [of his repository]." Some of these vaults[1] are said to be dangerous to the uninitiated who avoid them and in this way the sanctity of some chiefs' meeting-places is guarded.

According to Kimsquit belief, *Ăno°likwolsaix* has a husband, *Ălmoqltaikila*, who dwells with her in every repository. If an uninitiated person should chance to find a vault, he falls dead before the power emanating from *Ăno°likwolsaix*. Her husband then restores the dead by blowing violently on the back of the victim's neck, accompanying this with cries of *hoip*. When a person is initiated into the *kusiut* society, the uninitiated hear the songs used, in many of which are references to the experiences of the novice with this supernatural pair.

Turning now to the manner in which the *kukusiut* regard their own society, it is evident that the most important duty of each member is to aid in impressing and deceiving the uninitiated. The prestige of the organization depends upon the ability of its members to inspire awe, hence any weakness in fulfilling this obligation is an anti-social act. For this purpose the society acts as a whole. Many *kukusiut* have, for example, Cannibal prerogatives, and on occasion the Cannibals, having the same functions, work together, but they do not form a separate organization of their own.[2] Many of the means employed to deceive and impress the uninitiated have already been described. Mythology records, and it appears to be a fact, that long ago the ascendancy of the *kukusiut* was often challenged by the *a'alk* and other uninitiated, but when the white man came the society had reached a position of such eminence that the powers of its members were unquestioned. Moreover, the combined strength of virtually all the seniors of the tribe was so great that an uninitiated person could not assert himself even if he was suspicious.

Although members of the society exert every effort to con-

[2] The Bella Coola state that such sub-societies are found among the Kwakiutl.

[1] [i.e. - a repository of supernatural power - ANALYST]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[Kusiut Society Initiation]

*575 567 struggling in fear, to the secret meeting-place. Here the marshals discuss what shall be done with him; some suggest that he be killed, others a lesser fate, and finally someone advises his initiation. After apparently due deliberation, this is decided upon; the slave is told the mysteries of the society and is warned of the dire fate which will befall him if he tells the uninitiated of his knowledge. The actual ceremonial rites of admission do not vary according to the preliminaries used.

*575 796 Initiation can take place at any time during the *kusiut* season. After consulting with the marshals in order to choose an evening when no other dance is to take place, the relatives of the neophyte, whom it will be convenient to term X, invite the *kukusiut* to their house. Sometimes songs are sung by way of rehearsal, at other times food is distributed at once. As the people are eating, one of the marshals stands up to address them, saying that X's relatives propose to take him to the repository of the name ———, so that he may become a *kusiut*. X, to whom this may be the first intimation, is called from his house and taken from the village by several of his kinsmen, with one or more of the marshals. The *kukusiut* disperse and tell the uninitiated in the other houses that X has gone to meet *Ăno°likwolsaix*. His companions hear the news with mingled envy and thankfulness that they are not to have this dangerous privilege.

[178] In ancient times X and his guides may actually have proceeded to his repository, but for several generations at least it has been customary for the party merely to go to some lonely spot in the woods for the night. Those accompanying X tell him as much of the ritual of the society as they think fit, not forgetting to emphasize the trust put upon him, and the fate which will befall him if he should communicate his knowledge.

[787 184] He is expected to report that he went to the repository where, lying face downwards on the ground, he saw *Ăno°likwolsaix*; in Kimsquit he is supposed also to see her husband.[9]

[776] [9]According to one old Bella Coola a sister of *Ăno°likwolsaix* also remains in every repository.

[Kusiut Society Initiation]

*575 791 796 [774] [781] some ashes which he puts into his mouth and chews. Of course he masticates only the ashes but X, unaware of this, is concerned for the fate of his spirit. At last it is restored to him and he is told that the *siki* has altered it from that of an uninitiated person to that of a *kusiut*.[1] The psychological effect of this act on the mind of a young man who has not had time to adjust himself to his new knowledge and who is firmly convinced of the powers of the *siki* is tremendous.

The first *siki* now instructs two *kukusiut* sitting on either side of X to lie down to serve as a seat for him. They do so, irrespective of who they may be. If the novice is still ignorant of the full mysteries of the society, the *siki* announces that he is going to get a call for X. He walks around the house, peering here and there as if seeking something, and then pounces as if he had caught an object between his hands. A whistle [534] is heard, such as the novice knows accompanies the coming of every call; but he does not know that the noise is made by compressing a goat or bear bladder-whistle between two sticks held beneath the armpit. This is the "mystery" of the strange noises.

*575 796 "Do you know what makes that noise?" ask the two *kukusiut* on whom X is sitting.

[688] If X denies all knowledge, the mystery is explained to him, and he is warned that he will be killed if he communicates the information to uninitiated persons. If he answers that he knows the cause, he is asked who has told him. Perhaps some lad has been peeking and has told X of what he has seen; in that case the over-inquisitive youth is at once initiated to prevent further leakage of information. As soon as X has learnt the great secret he moves to one side and the singers take their positions behind the fire. His father, or whoever it [425] may be from whom he is to obtain his name, then stands up [553] and unfolds its origin, telling which supernatural being is his patron, and the locality of his repository. X sometimes re-

[178] [1] This part of the rite has been omitted for so many years that many of the middle-aged *kukusiut* have forgotten it.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Cannibal Dance]

each house in succession, borrowing filled chamber vessels. Five or six men are waiting for X with these, and as he enters his house, they pour urine over him. Thus restored to partial sanity, he cries out in a different tone of voice, and at once visits every house. The *kukusiut* are still with him, but need not guard him as closely since he is now less liable to frenzy. The uninitiated are greatly relieved at this removal of peril from among them. Later in the day *kukusiut* go to the different houses, asking for choice salmon-grease with which the Cannibal will later be fed. The giving of the first food to X, the later sending aloft of his call, and the restrictions which he observes for the rest of the winter do not differ from those described for other Cannibals.

Snuniq's patron is a *snuniq* of the Mountain which became petrified in the beginning of time. At his repository there is a spring beneath a large boulder. Uninitiated persons passing the spot are often terrified by hearing the growling of a Cannibal from beneath the stone. It is in this place that persons suffering from virulent skin disease are washed by X, as described in a previous chapter.

Few particulars could be learnt of the rite as carried out by *Qolliaohmx*, though it is said to resemble the one just described in every respect. The prerogative was obtained in a vision of one of the Cannibal's early ancestors, who located the repository of the name beneath a large, flat stone, directly in the old trail up the valley. When anyone treads on it, reverberation is heard. The writer was a spectator when the present *Qolliaohmx* gave his dance in January, 1924, but the rite was performed in such a perfunctory manner that little could be learnt from it. The Cannibal wore two bands of dyed cedar-bark on his left forearm, under one of which was a container of red paint. Uttering his cry of *xwa-*, *xwa-*, *xwa-*, and looking around with a wild air, he frequently buried his face in his arm, between the bands. The red paint made a realistic representation of blood, especially as it dropped with red smudges on the floor. On this occasion, the dancer appeared

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

in a flesh-coloured bathing-suit, imitating the nakedness of earlier years. The writer was talking to one of the marshals, a very old man, and remarked how different the present rites must appear to him.

"Yes," replied the old man. "But after all, the change is not so great. In former years we imitated what the supernatural beings did, now we imitate what our fathers did."

Many ethnologists, acquainted with the elaborate rituals carried out on the coast early in this century, have expressed surprise at the rapidity with which these have dwindled to mere shadows. The writer believes that one factor for the Bella Coola decline in ritual, is the realization that the rites are imitative, and that accordingly their significance need not be lost when further imitation is added.

Further research would undoubtedly have added particulars of the manner in which other Cannibals carried out their rites, but to obtain the full details of all would have been detrimental to other types of investigation; it is believed that the above descriptions are typical. Before passing to other dances, a few general remarks on the Cannibal ritual may prove useful.

In view of the arduous character of the dance, and the necessity for impressing the uninitiated with the great power of the Cannibals, the marshals usually prohibit a man from acting unless he is physically strong. Rarely, however, a woman is allowed to be a Cannibal if she has the necessary prerogative, but usually only if she is the last survivor of her family. In such cases the shorter rite is the more common.

As before stated, *kusiut* origin myths are supposed to be remembered, but in practice few *kukusiut* know the history of their prerogatives. The process of forgetting has undoubtedly increased in the last few years, but the writer feels confident that they were never maintained with the same care as origin myths connected with the first people.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

nusiutălsap and has part of that day as well as all of *qothm* and *nəkusam* to complete his task. On the evening of *nusiutălsap*, the *kukusiut* are summoned as usual to practise X's two songs. The ritual on this night as well as on the following, *qothm*, appears to be of the usual *kusiut* type although one informant stated that complete silence reigns in order to spread the fiction among the uninitiated in the neighbouring houses that X is waiting quietly to commune with the supernatural beings, and that consequently the customary dancing is omitted. This is probably a modern deviation from the traditional usage.

On the night of *nəkusam* a herald summons the *kukusiut* to X's house with the cry:

Tălăti dənai nuxnăkəmi dəkusiutai
Come to the little *kusiut* dance.

This is merely a rhetorical remark since the dance is really one of major import. They enter, and are at once given a small meal.[1] Then the cry is raised for the uninitiated. When they are seated, X appears from the back-room, carrying before him the fungus, held by the shorter end of rope projecting above, while the longer is coiled up behind it out of sight. The *kukusiut* begin to beat time furiously as X slowly circles the fire. Then, solemnly and carefully, he sets the fungus on the floor where, to the wonder of the uninitiated, it disappears from sight as though it had sunk into the planks. This is, in fact, the case, since the carpenters have prepared a small hole in the floor through which it disappears, leaving only the cord lying on the surface. Any four *kukusiut* men are called forward to support X and stand, two on either side of him. The dancer bends down, picks up the string easily with one hand and draws up the fungus into sight, taking care not to raise it high enough to expose the longer end of the rope passing through the hole. He lowers his burden and the fungus disappears from sight. X whispers to one of his four assistants and the latter calls out, as if just prompted:

[1] This may be also a modern innovation.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Fungus Dance]

from a distance. When one of the participants has speared the object, it is drawn to shore and carried into the house. The uninitiated are then called in and enter, often covering their heads with blankets to prevent their spirits being drawn from them. None of the Bella Coola appears to know what governed, in the old days, the choice between these two performances.

The Fungus dance differs considerably from typical *kusiut* rituals already described. In part this is certainly due to decay of custom. When the writer witnessed the dance in the winter of 1923-4 it was carried out very crudely by *Snunê-ka'kas*, who, unwilling to admit this, was secretive about the proper ritual. Consequently, the performance of the dance was more of a hindrance than a help to the investigator. But even when full weight is given to this circumstance, it is clear that the Fungus dance is peculiar, particularly in the omission of masked figures on *nalusam*.

The ritual on that occasion was further complicated by the fact that *Snunêka'kas* has also the prerogative of dancing at an eclipse of either the sun or the moon, and insisted on this fact being brought out in connection with her songs. Four of these were composed instead of the usual two, and the supernatural beings described in them were:

Alquntâm: under the name of *Sunâlotis*.

The Moon.

Smaien a: This was introduced on account of being the place from which the Salmon-Bringer leaps to the sun. A mask representing this place of petrified power is always painted with salmon designs and the blanket of the wearer is decorated in the same way.

The *Snung* mouths that act as posts at the ends of the sun's course.

Skîlm: A supernatural being dwelling under the river who is able to use a fungus in a dance held there. Detailed information about this creature could not be obtained.

At any eclipse, no matter what the season of the year or

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Mystery Dance]

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plains that until the three correct solutions have been given, X will be able neither to eat nor to sleep. Moreover, this would mean a continuation of the *ẖaxiwa* season far into the spring. X is supposed to know the three answers but to be unable to communicate them, though if a nearly correct reply is given, he shows it by dancing violently. A clever actor is thus able to instil considerable action into the proceedings by leading on an eager guesser with movements of increased animation, but the result is always the same—his dancing grows weaker as if the one replying had strayed into a false path. A marshal explains that the failure is due to the supernatural being *ẖaxayalitsalais* having robbed the guesser of his mental ability. When the replies have stopped, X takes up his stick and leaves the house, followed by his escort. He enters the dwelling immediately above, where the same performance is repeated: this is done in each house of the village.

All the *ẖaẖaxiwa* return with X to his home where what little is left of the night is passed in eating and in listening to speeches from the marshals.

In the morning the carpenters erect a circular enclosure between the fire and the back-room. It is raised on posts about four feet long, has a diameter of approximately twelve feet, and is surrounded by a wall three or four feet high, often decorated with paintings according to the dancer's wishes. The uninitiated are told that X must remain in this, except when on periodic visits to the other houses, until the three answers have been guessed, and that he must not eat, sleep, or even sit down. In recent years the prohibition with regard [178] to eating has been neglected, but it is said that in the last century one man abstained from all food except fern root for two months. X climbs into the enclosure and throughout the day the uninitiated in the other houses can hear the rattling of his dance apron as he moves to and fro.

Just before dusk the *ẖaẖaxiwa* assemble in X's home, preparatory to sallying forth to every house in the village as on the previous evening. The remembrancers attend him, care-

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Mystery Dance]

masks representing the three successful answers. Little attention is paid to actual design, and the workmen use their initiative to a considerable extent.[a] One mask always made is that of *Snuslaxwai*, a being who appears to act as concealer for *Älquntäm*. As far as could be learnt, if *Älquntäm* wishes to conceal anything from a human being, such as the hiding-places in a Mystery dance, *Snuslaxwai* is entrusted with the task. In addition to the usual well-known supernatural beings, X often orders representations of mammals, birds, or fish; he may even ask a man to make a mask without stipulations and then the finished product is as much a surprise to him as to anyone else. There is no relationship between the masks made and the guesses registered. If X is wealthy, the number to be constructed may run to fifty or more. *Nusiutälsap* concludes in the usual way as soon as all the work has been allotted.

Two days is not long enough for the completion of such a large number of masks, so *nəbu:am* must be postponed, and *qotlam* is correspondingly delayed for four days. In the evening the heralds invite first the *kukusiut* and then the eager, though fearful uninitiated. They take their places and in Kimsquit, not in Bella Coola, marvel at some of the masks hanging behind the fire, though no explanation is vouchsafed them until the following evening. Presently the singers begin to beat out one of X's songs and he starts dancing violently, only to stop long before it is ended. The musicians quickly change to another; he performs briefly, then ceases; this is repeated for a third tune, and similarly for a fourth, a fifth, and so on. If the preliminaries have been long drawn out, X may have as many as twenty songs and he dances to a fragment of each. After he has performed, the singers strike up the tune of any *kusiut*

[a] Possibly this disregard for exact portrayal of supernatural beings is a modern degeneration. The Bella Coola of today say quite frankly that they have forgotten many beings used by their ancestors, so have no hesitation in inventing new designs and naming them even for natural phenomena which they consider must be caused by supernatural agency. On the other hand, the burning of masks, which seems to be an old practice, would tend to lessen conventionalization in all but the best-known figures.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

[The Mystery Dance]

statements. Non-members recognize that Deer, Varied Thrush, and Wolf are really persons, but they have no idea who or what they are, while their whole training, combined with the atmosphere with which the whole ceremony is surrounded, makes it easy for them to believe that they are seeing supernaturally endowed animals. If an uninitiated person should voice his doubts, he would be reported at once to the marshals by a spy and forthwith made a *kusiut*.

The next to come forth is a figure wearing a mask representing a man, and carrying a long stick to the end of which is tied a bundle of burning rags. The actor must be able to run swiftly, and, as he dashes at full speed around the fire, the strips of cloth are drawn out into a flaming stream behind him, producing a spectacular effect in the semi-gloom. *Ano'lîtsoltsais* explains that this is Shooting Star, a supernatural being who behaves peculiarly and who has, therefore, passed rapidly and without the droning invitation that accompanies the passage of the other visitors. When *Qaoldo'i* gave this dance, the rags were dipped in coal-oil to make them burn brightly, and one informant thought that this particular supernatural one was, perhaps, not shown in the old days. It must be remembered that details of the ceremony are constantly changing according to the skill and inventive ability of the carpenters.

To the accompaniment of O..... from the announcer and the droning of the women, there next emerge four masked figures representing the four Carpenters. In whatever ceremonial they appear, their masks are the same because they, as master-artisans, are supposed to have fashioned them for themselves. They dance around the fire without singing and disappear behind the enclosure. *Ano'lîtsoltsais* explains that these are *Masmasklâmx*, the Carpenters of *Nuxalxmaista*.

Now *Oqolikts Alquntâm* comes forth. He is the herald of *Alquntâm* who summons the supernatural ones to *Nuxalxmaista* for the winter ceremonial. He wears a man's mask, surmounted by a wooden bird which can be made to flap its wings by means of a hidden cord, and he carries a staff on top

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

Sukaiai send back X's call in the usual manner. Then, two by two, the masks are cast on to the fire and the ceremonial is over.

THE DANCE OF THE TALLY POSTS

As previously described, a tally post is erected in the land above for every Bella Coola at birth. As long as this memorial is upright and firm, the individual to whom it refers enjoys health and prosperity, but if it becomes crooked he falls ill. The uninitiated believe that several *Sukaiai* have the prerogative of climbing to the land above during the ceremonial season and straightening leaning tally posts. This is such a useful activity that it must have exercised great influence on the uninitiated in early days, but the rite has not been properly carried out since the smallpox epidemic in the last century. The following account was obtained from two old men who remembered the manner in which a certain *Onikaif of Tcmaut* performed a year or two before "The Great Sickness." Neither of the informants was a *Sukaiai* at the time, but they were able to supplement their recollections of the dance with what they afterwards learnt when initiated, so the following account is probably accurate in outline though deficient in detail. It will be convenient to refer to the dancer as X, and describe the ceremony in the present tense. It was also performed at Kimsquit many years ago.

The rite resembles *Sukaiapa* dances in many respects. X must obtain the consent of the marshals during the preceding summer, and their permission is refused unless the prospective dancer is a man of proved discretion. If they agree, X asks a number of *Sukaiai* women to help him by making a very long and strong rope of nettle fibre. At intervals the work-women gather for the purpose in the back-room of X's house, taking care that no uninitiated see what they are doing. Every effort is made to ensure that there is no flaw in the rope as a break would be a serious matter, punishable by death.

Near the winter solstice the marshals choose a suitable time

2: McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

[The Dance of the Murdered Slave]

* 575 *796 woman drums, then she leaves the house, ostensibly to return to her repository up the valley.

The singers at once begin to compose a new song, describing X's visitor and something of her history. The ritual that follows is that of the ordinary *tsoónmem* and requires no special description. On the night of *nuxnitálap* a large number of [532] masks are ordered, including one series representing wasps, another of young lads, and still another of the latter with swollen faces. The only other part of the dance with a distinctive ritual is that of *nuhuxum*.

In the early evening the *kukuxiut* assemble in X's house to [532] inspect the enormous wasps' nest which the carpenters have [178] erected behind the fire. In recent years this has been made of canvas, *nuhúp* the place of matting. Within are several stages, on which the defenders stand, each a *kuxiut* wearing a wasp's mask and carrying a miniature bow and arrow. The attackers are other members of the society chosen for their small stature and armed with clubs and branches; each wears a boy's mask and each carries a second, representing the same individual with badly swollen face. Considerable time is required to perfect the arrangements and select the performers, but at last all is in readiness and the uninitiated are called in.

They marvel at the enormous wasps' nest and presently [714] witness an assault on it. The attackers, protected by armour, [825] valiantly beat on the structure with clubs as they swing their branches as if brushing away the angry insects; this is the way that boys normally attack a wasps' nest. The defenders discharge their arrows and at intervals one of the attackers calls out in pain and falls down, presently rising with badly swollen face. The uninitiated do not realize that he has slipped the second mask from beneath his blanket to his face. X stands at one side, throwing his arm with a sweeping motion in the direction of the combat, while *Awi'lkuulaxis* gives her customary explanations. At last the nest is beaten down whereupon one of the Cannibals begins to growl and the uninitiated rush away. The ritual concludes in the usual way.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

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assemble to witness the dance of *Alquntám*. This is his function in the land above, so it is natural for him to do the same in this world.

THE DANCE OF *Alquntám*'s FISHERMAN

Alquntám in the land above has a servant who uses a hand-net, *xots*, in fishing for his master. He is accordingly known as *Alquntám*'s *Xoxpstám*, "Fisherman," and is patron for a *kusiut*.

THE DANCE OF THE TOP

The playful *Sáxolkumukhs Alquntám* has a favourite toy consisting of a stick which can be made to spin between the hands. This top, if it may so be termed, is patron for some *kusiut*. The writer was unable to learn how it is displayed on *nuhuam*.

THE DANCE OF THE PETRIFIED HAMMER

The patron of one *kusiut* is a hammer which in some way was changed to stone in the beginning of time when the Bella Coola River first flowed to the sea.

THE DANCE OF THE GRIZZLY BEAR

A *kusiut* named *Bálxus* has, as patron, a grizzly bear resident in *Xmoqus*'s house.

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VARIOUS ORIGIN MYTHS

In most cases *kusiut* dances have been preserved until the present day, although the myths on which they depend have long since been forgotten, but the reverse is sometimes the case. The following myths, were recorded with few, or no details of the associated dances. In several cases, one of the same type has already been recorded, so that the significance will be apparent.

A COMPOSITE ORIGIN MYTH[20]

Long ago there lived in *Stuie* a man and his wife who were powerful, prosperous, and able to give their children many good names. This

[20] Related by Mrs. Willie Mack.

[115]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

* 575 * 796 781 figures are really beings from another world. The explanation lies in the profound belief of all Bella Coola in the near presence of the supernatural; consequently, a supernatural explanation is the one normally given for all unusual incidents. The dances themselves are filled with strange manifestations, particularly the weird whistling concerning the origin of which the uninitiated have no idea. Once convinced by this means of the presence of unknown powers, it is easy for them to believe that the masked figures are visitors from the other world. Nor was their belief in former days shaken by certain representations which were palpably false, such as that of the sun. No one could believe that the disk which moved across the back of the house was the sun itself; but on the other hand it seemed marvellous to the uninitiated, ignorant of the means used to portray it. To the white man there seems a fundamental difference between a supernatural being and the representation of a strange object made to move by unseen means, but to the Bella Coola both belong to another realm, and are accordingly akin. Moreover, there were occasions when the uninitiated must have seen the shifting or actual falling of a mask, for example, during the fight with wasps. But here again the deep belief of the non-members came to the help of the *kukusiut*, who told their guests that this was caused by the coming of a call to the actor, and what might easily have become doubt and suspicion was thus changed to respect.

[178] [123] [114] The writer laboured under two tremendous difficulties in collecting information about *kusiut* matters; the present dances are mere shadows of what they formerly were, and there are no more uninitiated. His presence and quest for information served to stimulate interest and led to a partial revival of the old rites, but the bulk of his material was obtained from informants rather than from actual observation. It is a universal characteristic of mankind to idealize accounts of former practices, so it is not only possible, but probable, that the foregoing descriptions are more perfect than many of the rites to which

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

they refer. Even when full allowance is made for this, the fact still remains that the *kukusiut* were able to carry out dances in which they deceived the uninitiated. Above all, it is clear that those who were not members of the society had the greatest respect for the powers of those who were, and although doubt may have existed concerning the identity of the supernatural visitors, there was not the slightest concerning the ability of the *kukusiut* to have, for example, their stomachs ripped open. The writer discussed this point with too many old men and women to have the slightest uncertainty on this point, and he feels confident that anyone who could have listened to the account of a reliable old man concerning his fears when he had "killed" a *kusiut* in this manner, would have shared his conviction.

It would be fascinating to discuss at some length the probable history of the *kusiut* society, but this would entail a comparison with the rites of other coastal tribes and belongs to the realm of comparative ethnology. This monograph deals only with Bella Coola practices as the writer saw them or heard them described, so that the history of the society can only be treated from this angle. It appears certain that the rites have increased in secrecy. One old marshal with whom the matter was discussed remembered having heard that long ago masks were constructed in the presence of the uninitiated. Considered as an isolated statement this would have little value, but in conjunction with information derived from Kimsquit it becomes of importance. It is true that in Kimsquit the masks are made in secret, but they are shown to the uninitiated as masks, and the writer was told of one instance in which *Tlequts*, during his round of the village, fell into the water and remained there all day, to the amusement of non-members who recognized that he was merely a disguised human being. It is even said that long ago the manufacture of masks was entrusted to influential uninitiated. It is clear that there has been a tremendous increase in secrecy even at Kimsquit, and a great deal more at Bella Coola. The writer believes that

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

*575 long ago the *kusiut* society was composed of individuals re-
*796 garded as having supernatural endowments, and who perhaps
(believed this themselves. In course of time their influence
●178 increased to such an extent that they were able to convince
184 non-members of the supernatural origin of objects used in their
[532] ceremonial.

[115] Unfortunately, information from Kimsquit was obtained almost exclusively from one old man, who, though a marshal well informed in *kusiut* matters and in many ways an almost ideal informant, had long since realized that the dances could be nothing more than representations, and it is possible that his remarks were coloured by this knowledge. Though he tended to minimize the attitude of belief with which the un-
[781] initiated regarded masked figures, yet he fully agreed with every statement made by the Bella Coola themselves with regard to the firm belief of non-members concerning the supernatural powers of the dancers. He also confirmed statements
[688] respecting punishment if an error should occur, and mentioned the shooting of a Bella Bella dancer who had allowed his mask to fall during a *sisaok* dance. As far as actual ritual is concerned, the differences in procedure between Bella Coola and Kimsquit are unimportant, and differences in belief are less than they appear at first sight. The Bella Coola *kukusiut*
[781] seem to have perfected their organization and to have been able to impress the uninitiated to a greater extent than their Kimsquit fellows, but the fundamentals of the society are identical.

*575 Traditions concerning the early history of the society are
*796 probably of little value historically, but they are important as
173 indicating the mental attitude of the Bella Coola. Considering the importance of the society there are relatively few accounts of what took place long ago; the Bella Coola know that it exists, believe that the rites are identical with those carried out by their ancestors for generations, and theorize no further. It was only in the beginning of time that things were radically different; it is believed that then all the people were endowed

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

173 he lapsed into silence, knowing that the odds were too great for him.
*575 The Cannibal realized that if this powerful man could be initiated into
578 their society he would be a source of strength, so he said:

"You are now an initiate of mine."

Xɪmxɪmlaix understood that this meant he was to be initiated into the *kusiut* society. He agreed, but asked to be permitted to complete the *a'alk* dance which he was performing that evening, and to get beating sticks for which he had gone to the forest. The *kukusiut* were only too willing to grant this dispensation in their joy at having a valuable recruit.

On his return to the village, *Xɪmxɪmlaix* told his fellow *a'alk* that he was going to be a *kusiut* and they were greatly grieved at loss of their leader. That night they gave the dance which had been started and composed a song of which the theme was the way in which their rivals had fallen until their heads were upside down. The *kukusiut*, mocked in this way, feared that this was a prelude to further trouble with the *a'alk*, but *Xɪmxɪmlaix* duly carried out his promise and was enrolled as a *kusiut*. Bereft of their leader, many of his disconsolate associates were admitted as *kukusiut*, and ever since that time there has been relatively little friction between the two societies. In due course the Cannibal gave his dance with a song describing how he had met a strange creature over whom he had prevailed; this was, of course, the uninitiated *Xɪmxɪmlaix*.

[203] To these two is attributed the origin of the practice of
*[796] shoving to decide priority of invitation giving. It is said that both *Xɪmxɪmlaix* and the Cannibal once wished to invite the people to a ceremony on the same evening and agreed to shove against each other to decide which should have preference. *Xɪmxɪmlaix* prevailed, and the Cannibal duly postponed his dance and went with his associates to the winner's house.

•[178] As before stated, stories of this kind dealing with the alleged history of the society are of slight value. As far as they go, they agree with other evidence pointing to the gradual growth of the *kusiut* society from a band of elders endowed with supernatural power to a society with enormous prestige, dominating the life of the community and entirely overshadowing the *a'alk* who seem once to have been their rivals.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

but the Bella Coola do not consider this aspect and the children grow up in an atmosphere entirely lacking in restraint of speech. Some stories teach a moral lesson, but they are recounted merely for entertainment. At the present time, no one knows who invented the stories; they have been handed down from dim antiquity and alterations or embellishments are considered improper, while the composition of new tales appears to be unknown.

Another pastime is smoking. Among some Indian tribes the practice has a definite religious significance, but this appears to be lacking among the Bella Coola. Most of the men enjoy either a pipe or cigarettes, and some of the women also indulge, but few carry the habit to excess. All the older people affirmed that their ancestors had smoked for generations. Tobacco was not grown, but kinnikinick, *milix*ʷ, was used, and also a plant known as *lsaix*ˣ. Another smoking mixture was bark of *lsxwatelp*, toasted before a fire until dried and brown, and then crumbled between the hands. These materials have given place entirely to imported tobacco, and the white man's pipe has replaced the native one. The latter consisted of a gooseberry cane from which the pith had been extracted; sometimes a small bowl of elderberry wood was added, but often the mixture to be smoked was simply placed within the end of the hollow stem.

Adults, especially the men, are addicted to gambling. They are fond of placing stakes on a race or other trial of strength, and enjoy all kinds of games of chance. Some of the younger men have mastered a few of the simpler games of cards on which they spend a certain amount of time and money. The favourite gambling game, however, is one found in all parts of the coast, which is played with a pack of fifty-four smoothed crabapple sticks. The rules are complicated and no effort was made to learn more than the general principles. The pieces are divided among the eight or ten contestants and concealed; then one player guesses in whose hand a certain marked stick is hidden. If he is successful, the others pay him a forfeit; if

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

115 Schooner lacked the mental acumen of Joshua and Jim, but
177 he revealed himself as a tribal patriarch, proud of his family's
[153] history and eager to assist his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but feeling himself lost and helpless in the struggle before them. With sadness, but without bitterness, he used to speak of the approaching end of Bella Coola culture, and his words brought home the tragedy which the spread of civilization brings to so many, and the responsibility resting upon the white people as a whole.

153 Until an intelligence test is devised to correlate the mental
115 ability of the white man with that of the native, it is impossible to compare the two scientifically. None the less, the writer deliberately expresses the opinion that Joshua Moody and Jim Pollard are two of the most brilliant men he has met in any walk of life. They are undoubtedly the most able of the Bella Coola; others have only slightly less ability, while the mass of the population compares favourably with an
• 178 average white community. Their ability, however, is definitely conditioned by their conservatism. Absolute trust in the traditions of their ancestors has checked speculation, as the established explanation is never questioned; new inventions, unauthorized by custom, have been regarded as almost sacri-
[626] legious; the force of public opinion, while valuable as a deterrent to anti-social practices, has effectively restrained innovations. The Bella Coola are a good example of a community where development has been atrophied by extreme conservatism fostered by religious beliefs.

105 Taking into account the material obstacles, the achievements of these people have not been insignificant. In former
[322] times, provided only with tools of stone and untempered copper, they built graceful canoes, made watertight boxes, hewed planks from mighty cedars, and erected large houses which called for considerable engineering skill. Judged by
[532] white standards, their carving and painting lacked artistic deli-
[535] cacy, but it required no mean ability to portray crest designs to meet their own standards. Passing from the purely mechanical

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

APPENDIX A

MECHANICAL PROCESSES

NO attempt was made to study either the material culture of the Bella Coola, or their methods of manufacturing, but information on some points was obtained incidentally. All sociological and religious features connected therewith have already been described.

THE TAKING AND PREPARATION OF OLACHEN

The run of olachen, *spuiχ*, comes about the end of April, and as many as possible are caught. In preparation, nets, *ălt'x*ʷ, are brought out from the boxes where they have been stored during the winter, examined, and repaired. If necessary, new ones must be manufactured out of nettle-(*lxwa-*) fibre laid away by the women for this purpose. By rolling the material on their legs, they produce a thin twine; five strands of this are then interwoven, making a finished cord capable of resisting great strain. The nets are constructed by the men. The type used at the present time, which is said not to differ from that formerly employed, consists of a purse-like sack, oval in cross-section, open at the wider end and tapering very gradually to the other, which is closed. The total length is about thirty feet, the diameter at the open end about eight feet, and at the closed end about three feet. A new net is dipped in a mixture of boiled hemlock-bark to darken it, and then boiled in a solution of willow-bark to prevent the knots from slipping.

The setting out of a net is not an easy task, so two or three men agree to work as partners. In the present degenerate days, property rights are not respected and each group selects a suitable spot. The best location is where the water is about three feet deep and runs rapidly, but without ripples, over a smooth piece of the bottom; such a place is called a *skliax*. When the fish begin to run plentifully, the partners paddle out to set their net, taking with them four stakes, each about ten feet in length. The weight of a full net is tremendous, so the poles have to be driven down at least six feet, a difficult task on account of the stony bottom. Selecting the exact spot, one of four posts, *ălkdjălos*, is set upright and held in position by being tied to a cross-piece, *nudjiqosta*, fastened to the canoe for the purpose. While his two partners hold the craft steady, the third man begins to pound down the stake; metal mauls are now commonly used, but in former times this work was always done with an unhafted stone maul, *lxwoma*. The fishermen relieve one another intermittently until the top of the pole has been driven down to within